Sir William Jones and the beginnings of Indology.

Soumyendranath Mukherjee.

Errata

Page 3. Line 20 read Collection.

Page 5. Line 6 read and Mr.N.S.Marsh.

Line 7.read and to Miss B.Schutz.

Page 9. f.n.2. read Weber,H. Metrical Romances Vol. I. pp.199-247.

Page 26. Line 17. read mode.

Page 28. f.n.1. read Shore,J. Memoirs p.20.

Page 32. f.n.4. read Shore J. Memoirs p.31

Page 61. Lines 17-18. The quotation starts from "above all ...

Page 67. Line 13. The quotation starts from "no..

Page 79. Line 4. read seventeen-century thinkers.

Page 89. Line 7. read "lónge-aimed

Line 8 read "rend

~~xxgx xi2xxLinesx6xxxxxadxAsxearlyxxxx~~

f.n.3. read Letter to George John 18.2.1780 Spencer papers.

Page ~~123~~ 112. Line 6. read As early as.

Page 123. f.n.2. Works Vol.I. p.367.

Page 128. Line 5. read hesitant.

Page 136. Line 4. read rewarding.

Page 139. Lines 10 and 14. read Society.

Page 140 Line ~~x40xx~~. 14. read research.

Page 142. Line 14 read Grand Jury Room.

Page 145. Line 19 read Grand Jury Room.

Page 146. f.n.4. read later in Nov 1786 .....

...Memoirs p.287.

Page 148 Line 21. read Society.

Page 154.f.n. 4. Letter to Jos. Cowper Memoirs 296-97.

Page 156 Line 6. read The press.

Page 159.Line 16. read Four.

Page 174. f.n. 4. Bodl.(Oxf.) 28480 cf.Supra p.74.

Page 175. Line 1.read may.

Page 181. Line 10 read ~~Hmxs~~.gods.

Page 187. Line 2. Vikramāditya.

Page 199. f.n. 2. read Selected by J.Benthall

Page 209. f.n.1. read Thales and Solon.

Page ~~212~~. Line 13. read grazes.

Page 217. f.n.2. Letter to John Macpherson.5.2.1786.

Page 222.f.n.1. Shore,J. Memoirs p.285

Page 242. England's Alarm etc. 1785

Page 246. Memoirs etc. read 1804.

Page 247. Sir William Jones's Poems (ed. Benthall,J.)
Sebastian Carter. Cambridge 1961.

Page 251. Middleton,C. The history of the life of
Marcus Tullius Cicero 2 Vols.London 1741

Page 252. Shore,C. Memoirs of the life and correspondence of John, Baron Teignmouth by his son (Charles Shore). 2 Vols. 1843.

Voltaire. Fragments sur l'Indé,sur le général Lalli,et sur le Comte de Morahgies Paris 1763.

Page 255. Aslam,M. The Translation of English classics,etc.

Page 258. Goldley,A.D.

Page 259. Lockhart,L Nadir Shah etc.

Page 260. Muhamoud,~~XXXx~~ F.M.

PREFACE

A biography of a scholar like Sir William Jones could be written in two ways; it could be a review of his works and an analysis of his ideas or a straight-forward story of his life. In this work I have tried to discover the interaction of the two, the man and his works. I have attempted to trace the impact of his personality on his works. If Sir William looms larger than Indology (perhaps his greatest contribution to scholarship) it is because of the nature of my subject; his personality overshadowed his works, and his attitudes towards India had a more far reaching effect than any of his "discoveries".

Originally, I intended to make a complete survey of early British attitudes towards India, but soon I realised that it would be a lifetime's work. So I concentrated my attention on Jones, who is perhaps the most interesting person in the history of British policy in India. He came to India in 1783 less than two years before Hastings's departure, and in 1786 Cornwallis arrived with a very different idea of how to rule India. Jones worked with and was loved and admired by both of them. He shared with Hastings his admiration for India, yet his Whig philosophy found much in common with Cornwallis.

Being naturally alienated from authority and high society, Jones enjoyed the quiet life in Krishnagar in a mud house away from the gay social life of the English settlement in Calcutta. He was attracted to the simple, rather poor, rural life in India. In his correspondence he painted an idyllic picture of his life there. Yet he judged Indian culture by the standards of Classical Greece and discovered that she had had a high degree of civilisation in the past. This admiration for, on the one hand, the simplicity and beauty of rural life, and on the other the complex and well cultivated Indian civilisation, is the result of both his romanticism and his classical training.

This study is based on Jones's private correspondence. I have drawn heavily on his unpublished letters now retained at Althorp Park, Northampton. I am most grateful to the present Earl Spencer for kindly allowing me to study them. I have also used some official records in the India Office Library. Among the private papers there I used the Orme collection. I am most grateful to the librarian and the staff of the India Office Library for their kind cooperation. I am also most grateful to the Trustees of the British Museum, and to the Keepers of Manuscripts and and staff of the following libraries:- The National Library

of Wales, Aberystwyth; The National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh; The Central Library, Sheffield; The Bodleian Library, Oxford; The University Library, Cambridge; The Royal Asiatic Society; The University Library, Leiden; The National Széchenyi Library, Budapest; and The William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.S.A.

I am also grateful to the librarian and staff of the University of London Library, and the Library of the Institute of Historical Research, London, and especially to Mr. J. D. Pearson, the Librarian of the School of Oriental and African Studies Library. I am also grateful to the staff of the School of Oriental and African Studies Library and particularly to Miss N. Matthews.

I am indebted to the County Archivist and the staff of the County Record Office, Warwick.

My gratitude is due to the School of Oriental and African Studies Scholarships Committee for awarding me a Forlong Exhibition for the session 1960-1961, and to the University of London Scholarships Committee for awarding me a University of London Postgraduate Studentship for the sessions 1961-1962, and 1962-1963. The Central Research Fund of the University of London have been most generous in assisting me towards the cost of research incurred in Aberystwyth and Althorp Park. My parents have also

assisted me generously throughout.

During the course of my research I have received the guidance of my teacher Professor A. L. Basham, and I am deeply grateful for his patience and advice. My gratitude is also due to Dr. K. A. Ballhatchet, Dr. J. G. de Casparis Mr. Ian R. Christie, Mr. N. S. Marsh for their kind help and criticism. Miss B. Schutz, Miss J. Damanska and Mr. H. Muhammadi for help in translation. My wife's help throughout has been invaluable.

ABSTRACT

In this thesis I try to reconstruct the ideas of Sir William Jones in the light of the unpublished manuscript sources. I have drawn heavily on his unpublished correspondence to be found among the Spencer papers at Althorp Park, Northampton. Perhaps his greatest contribution is Indology (meaning the science which enquires into Indian history and culture). The latter half of the eighteenth century saw the British expansion in India. The prevailing problem was how to rule her. This was also a period of discontent in the West, with the American Revolution, the Movement for Parliamentary reform and finally the French Revolution. I judge Jones's ideas against three backgrounds: the British attitudes towards India, the English Whig philosophy and his own personality.

The thesis is written in seven chapters. They are as follows:-

1. India and the West: An evaluation of the eighteenth-century European attitudes towards India.
2. "A *philosopher among courtiers": A study of the growth of Jones's personality.

3. Early ideas about India and the Orient: A reconstruction of Jones's ideas of Asia prior to his departure for India.
4. Mr. Jones, "a staunch Whig, but very wrongheaded": A study of Jones's political ideas and his association with the early movement for Parliamentary reform.
5. The Foundation and the early years of the Asiatick Society: A study of the impact of the birth of the Asiatick Society on the development of Indology.
6. The beginnings of Indology: An evaluation of Jones's own contribution towards the study of ancient India.
7. The legacy of Jones: A study of Jones's idea of Indian law and government. He thought his Digest of Indian law would be his legacy to India, but his real legacy was the discovery of ancient India.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I. India and the West

To the late medieval and early modern Europe the term "India" conveyed a picture of a "farre-distant"[1] country, rich in spices and gems, embracing much of Asia and part of Africa, which was invaded and conquered by Alexander. His stories of thrilling adventures were handed down to the common people in the form of romances[2] and letters which purported to be written from India by Alexander to his mother and his preceptor Aristotle.[3] Christians believed that this rather fabulous and remote land was ruled by a Christian king called Prester John.[4] The legend of Prester John developed from the twelfth century, though his "letter" was first printed in 1500. There was another Christian tradition which was concerned with India; St. Thomas the Apostle was supposed to have preached the Gospel among the Indians.[5] This tradition was confirmed by Marco Polo who visited his reputed tomb in South India. Since the days of

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1. Purchas, S. Pilgrimages p.477.
2. Weber, H. Metrical Romances Ch.III pp.8-11.
3. Slessarev, V. Prester John p.4.
4. Op.cit. p.33.
5. Purchas, S. Op.cit. p.481.

Henry the Navigator the Portuguese had been making continuous efforts to discover the sea route to India in order to capture the lucrative spice trade from the Venetians who had previously monopolised it. They also wanted to find Christian allies in Asia to help them against their traditional enemy, the Moors. Although by the fifteenth century, with the Portuguese penetration in Ethiopia, the reputed area of Prester John's empire was cut down to a plausible size, all non-Muslim Asiatics were thought to be some kind of Christian. When Vasco da Gama landed in Calicut on 27 May 1498, he and his men entered a temple with the impression that it was a church.[1]

The European ideas of India changed rapidly with the increasing number of voyages after 1498 and especially from the seventeenth century when the Portuguese monopoly in the Indian seas was broken by the Dutch, English and the French. Among those who went on these voyages, besides the traders, were travellers, adventurers and missionaries. Soon Europe was flooded with travellers' tales, adventure stories and missionary reports. Since the advent of printing the reading public had increased greatly, and ~~thrived~~ throve on the stories of the exotic. They were eager to read accounts of

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1. Whiteway, R.S. The rise of the Portuguese power in India p.80.

the seafaring activities of their sons and of the strange and distant lands they visited. Such stories came from almost all quarters of the world. India provided a fertile field for travellers' tales. Her heterogeneous culture with uncommon and varied customs soon attracted the reading public in Europe. So the travellers and adventurers filled their journals with stories of satī, child marriage, and the caste system. They ~~might~~ may have been genuinely shocked by such practices as satī, but yet they were not hesitant in describing in detail the grotesque custom of girls jumping onto their husbands' funeral pyres. Similarly the naked mendicant# (Nāgā Sanyāsi#) whom Ralph Fitch described as the "monster among the rest"[1], figured well in travellers' journals.

But most of these travellers had very little real contact with the Indians. This is manifested in their explanations of Indian customs and manners. Edward Terry, the chaplain who accompanied Thomas Roe, thought out an incredible explanation for the Brahmins' śikhā: "They usually shave off all the haire from their heads reserving only a locke on the crowne for Mahomet to pull them into heaven".[2] The Jains were thought to be followers of

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1. Foster, William. Early travels in India p.19.

2. Op.cit. p.308.

Pythagoras.[1] The Aśokan pillars were explained as posts erected by Alexander commemorating his victory over Porus. Thomas Coryat was certain that the inscription on the pillar in Delhi was written in Greek.[2] If they had had any real contact, they would have had a very different explanation for the Brahmin's śikhā and the Aśokan pillars (though the prevalent Indian ideas of those ~~posts~~ columns were equally incredible). However there ~~had been~~ were other writers whose efforts were not solely devoted to describing their adventures in strange lands. There were always ~~a group of~~ more contemplative men among the travellers and especially among the missionaries who sought to explain the striking differences between the two cultures, the European and the Indian.

It may be that the Age of Reason reached a climax in the third quarter of the eighteenth century,[3] but much of

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1. Foster, William Early travels in India p.218.

2. Thomas Coryat, a rather eccentric and romantic seventeenth-century English adventurer in India wrote to Lawrence Whiteker, "I have been in a citie in this countrie called Delee where Alexander the Great joyned battle with Porus, K(ing) of India and conquered him; and in token of his victory erected a brasse pillar which remained to this day". Foster, William Early travels in India p.248, Cf. Foster, William The embassy of Sir Thomas Roe p.82.

3. Nicolson, H. Age of Reason p.xix.

the groundwork was prepared in the seventeenth century. This period saw the rise of Mercantilism and the accumulation of property and capital.[1] ~~The~~ Voyages and discoveries showed the limited knowledge of the ancients, and Europe rapidly lost its faith in the old world of authority and superstition. This time also saw the birth of modern science, which profoundly changed European thinking.[2] There was little faith left in the theory of Divine Right and many challenged the superstitious rituals practised by the churches. Some even expressed doubts on the doctrines of Revelation and on Genesis. The religious wars had left a heavily scarred Europe which now preferred to settle down in peace and tolerate different faiths.[3] If Hobbes's Leviathan represents the fear of disorder and anarchy it was shared by most thinkers. The security of private property was thought to be an important source of prosperity and happiness. Locke regarded the right to own property as the most sacred right, and believed that an important function of the State was to protect it.[4]

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1. Nussbaum, F.L. The triumph of science and reason pp.198-225.
2. Butterfield, H. Origins of Modern Science pp.166-174. Cf. Bernal, J.D. Science in History p.253.
3. Butterfield, H. Op.cit. p.166.
4. Cobban, A. Enlightenment N.C.M.H. Vol.7.p.103.

This Europe with its faith in Reason and its distrust of disorder looked at China with admiration. It was natural that China should be so admired, as according to the Jesuit reports she had an orderly government with the scholar-governors,-the Mandarins, and above all Confucian political philosophy. There started a cult of China which ~~dominated~~ much influenced European thought, throughout the eighteenth century.[1] India, by contrast appeared disorderly, chaotic and superstitious. Her heterogeneous culture, her diverse customs and her loosely-knitted Empire ~~was to them~~ were to the scholars of the time difficult to put into a rational order. Even more contemplative travellers in India like Roe and Bernier, whose journals on India can be considered as first attempts at comparative social studies, shared the contemporary belief in a well ordered society based on private property.

The complicated system of land tenure and the administration of justice were hardly understood, yet conclusions were drawn hastily. "The King", wrote Sir Thomas Roe,,"is the owner of all land and inherits all the land of all men after their death. His officers are merely to obey orders not to give any counsel".[2] There was no

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1. Reichwein, A. China and Europe p.20.

2. Foster, William The embassy of Sir Thomas Roe p.105.

written law, and justice was administered summarily: "Law they have none written. The Kyngs judgement bynds, who sits and gives sentence with much patience once weakly both in capital and criminal cases".[1] Bernier concluded that India had no private property, no nobility and no law. Such was also the case with other Asiatic powers. They were completely under the control of a type of despotic rule which Europe had never experienced. The Asiatic states he visited were rapidly moving to complete decay. The reason for this was the lack of private property in land. He advised Colbert, "Yes my dear Lord, to conclude briefly I must repeat it; take away the right of private property in land and you introduce as a sure and necessary consequence, tyranny, slavery, injustice, beggary, and barbarism".[2] Bernier's India was a country ruled by an absolute monarchy with such power as Europe had never seen. Since there was no nobility or propertied class there was no check on the power of the ruler. Thus Bernier laid the foundation for the theory of Oriental Despotism.

In the eighteenth century, Bernier's ideas were systematically worked out into a theory by Montesquieu, who claimed that feudalism was wholly a European phenomenon,

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1. Foster, William The embassy of Sir Thomas Roe p.105.
2. Bernier, F. Travels p.238.

and unknown in Asia. He was supported by Dow, Orme and many others. The differences between the Asiatic and the European systems were thought to be due to a various reasons, such as climatic conditions, and different customs, but above all it was the lack of private property in land which made Oriental Despotism a unique development in history.

This view was challenged by some. Though all agreed that India was ruled by absolute monarchy some recognised that she had attained a high degree of civilisation in the past, and that she had experienced private property in her history. Scrafton claimed that there had been private property in land and that the courts of justice in India followed established precedents. He also thought that India had been a happy and prosperous country until she was invaded by Nadir Shah.[1] Voltaire supported Scrafton. He found no difference between the European and Indian systems: "Feudalism is not an event; it is a very ancient form of government which exists in three quarters of our hemisphere with different administrations. The Grand Mughul is like the German Emperor. The subadors are the princes of the Empire".[2]

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1. Scrafton, L. Reflections on the Government of Indostan pp.24-25.

2. Voltaire, Fragments sur l'Inde pp.10-11.

The British were particularly interested in this debate on the system of law and government in India. In 1765 the East India Company took upon itself the charge of revenue administration in Bengal. There was then an urgent need to know who owned the land and how the civil justice was administered. ~~If~~ The Parliamentary history was ~~dominated by~~ much occupied with debates on the affairs of the East India Company,[1] and the reading public was kept informed ~~about India~~ through a number of pamphlets on the subject of how to rule India. Readers of the Monthly Review and the Gentleman's Magazine would notice that most of the pamphleteers of the century entered into the debate on the nature of private property and government in India.

Though India dominated British Parliamentary life and interest, information on her culture was still based on secondary sources. Europe had already learned a great deal about Islam but the medieval tradition of prejudice against it survived right down to the end of the eighteenth century.[2] This prejudice can be traced in the works of Scrafton, Dow and Holwell. Hinduism on the other hand appeared as an antithesis of Islam. ~~They~~ All writers on the subject agreed

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1. C.H.B.E. Vol.4.p.151.

2. Daniel,N. Islam and the West p.290.

that in spite of the superstitious rituals of the Brahmins, the Hindus were well aware of a pure morality and one supreme God.[1] Holwell went further than the others, and claimed that Hinduism was one of the three religions "which manifestly carry the divine stamp of God",[2] the other two being Judaism and Christianity. These dissertations on Hinduism were based on information gathered from the Brahmins and also from some Persian works. ~~However~~ Most Sanskrit texts remained unread. Some Jesuit fathers had mastered Sanskrit and from 1730 onwards their mission in Madura was sending home numerous Sanskrit manuscripts, but with the sole exception of Abraham Roger's translation of the Bhatṛhari's proverbs, no genuine Sanskrit work was translated until 1785 when Wilkins's translation of the Gītā was published in London.

So by the third quarter of the eighteenth century, India had become a comparatively familiar country to educated Europe. Her

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1. Dow, A. History of Hindostan Vol.1.pp.LXXIV-LXXVI; Holwell, J.Z. Original principles p.50; Scrafton L. Reflections on the Government of Indostan p.3.

2. Holwell, J.Z. Op.cit p. 50

civilisation, political system, law and government were being studied for pragmatic reasons. However the Orientalists of the Universities took little part in the development of Indian studies. Orientalism had ~~taken a definite turn~~ ceased to be a branch of theology in the seventeenth century, now the Orientalists' interest was focussed on Asiatic culture and society,[1] but most men who learnt Asiatic languages and wrote books on India and other parts of Asia were amateurs, travellers, Company officials and missionaries. They worked independently without an organisation and without a scientific methodological approach.

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1. Lewis, B. British Contribution to Asiatic Studies p.12.

Chapter II "A Philosopher among Courtiers"

William Jones was born a commoner; his father came from a yeoman family, settled in the island of Anglesey; his mother's father was a cabinet-maker in London. Whatever glory his fore-fathers might have attained,[1] Jones himself had very little interest in his remote ancestry. During one of his visits to Wales, he had a view of Anglesey; he described the island as "the ancient rock where my ancestors presided over a free, but uncivilised people".[2] In fact Wales was a strange country to him. After a visit to a town in North Wales he wrote, "I could not help fancying myself in a Flemish town; it was at least wholly unlike an English one as the language, manners, dress and countenances of the people are entirely different from ours".[3] George Nix, the maternal grandfather of Jones, had been a rival of Chippendale, He had made his way to the high table at Lord Macclesfield's house, though very little is known about him and his work.[4] William Jones

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1. Shore, J. Memoirs p.1.

2. Letter to George John 20.9.1775. Spencer papers.

3. W.J. to G.J.S. 14.4.1775. This did not prevent him from becoming a Cymmrodorian in 1778 and from learning Welsh, but he took little interest in the cultural history of his ancestors. See letter to L. Morris 30.10.1790. as published in Shore, J. Memoirs pp.343-344.

4. Marsh, N. Sir William Jones, University College records p.82.

(1680-1749), the father of the Orientalist, was a man of exceptional ability. He showed early talent in mathematics. After a brief period of adventure in the West Indies, William Jones settled in London as a tutor in mathematics. He had already made his mark in the high society of London; he struck up a friendship with Lord Anson, whom he had taught mathematics in the West Indies and in 1702 he published a work on navigation. In 1706 he published his second work, a book on mathematics.[1] He soon got himself appointed as tutor to Philip Yorke (afterwards Lord Hardwicke) and later to Thomas and George Parker, the first and second Earls of Macclesfield. The second Earl became his lifelong friend and patron. He came to know such celebrities as Isaac Newton, Samuel Johnson, and Edmund Halley. Newton took particular interest in Jones and allowed him to edit many of his minor works. In 1712 William Jones was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society for his exceptional ability in mathematics.

When Macclesfield retired to Shirburn Castle in Oxfordshire, William Jones went to stay with the family. Here he met Mary Nix, and soon married her. They had three children; the first, George, died in infancy, the second, Mary, was born in 1736, married a rich merchant named Rhinsford, and died in 1802. On 28 September 1746,

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1. Shore, J. Memoirs p.4.

on the eve of St. Michael's day, William, the third child, was born in London. The father died when William was three years old, leaving behind him his fame, a small fortune, and a group of friends who were well known in their time.[1]

The onus of bringing up the children fell upon the widow. From all accounts she appears to have been a remarkable woman for her time. Though born in the age of patronage and sinecure she was very independently minded and declined the Countess of Macclesfield's repeated requests to stay at Shirburn Castle. She remained in London and managed with the small fortune left by her husband. Her ideas of education were remarkably enlightened also. She had probably read John Locke's work on the subject, which saw its twelfth edition in 1752.[2] It was an age when the middle classes gave great importance to education and children were brought up under strict discipline. This discipline was often achieved by heavy corporal punishment; Susanna Wesley, who used the rod even for a baby in the cot, was

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1. Shore, J. Memoirs pp.4-7.

2. Kenyon, G. John Locke's dictions concerning education pp.1-27.

no exception.[1] John Locke, although he proscribed strict discipline in bringing up children, discouraged corporal punishment.[2] Perhaps following Locke, Mrs. Jones discarded corporal punishment and "to his incessant importunities for information on casual topics of conversation which she watchfully stimulated, she constantly replied, read and you will know".[3] Thus it is no wonder that Jones could quote Shakespeare and Gay's fables from memory at the age of four. Born in an age of child prodigies he was no exception; as a junior boy at Harrow he could write The Tempest from memory from the first line to the last.[4] His mother had indefatigable energy in stimulating him to work hard. He was not allowed to spend his vacations in idleness, for his mother helped him to improve his English and taught him the rudiments of drawing. The boy had an accident at the age of four which permanently damaged his eyesight. Even in 1788 we find him complaining of the strain of

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1. Bayne-Powell, R. The English child in the eighteenth century pp.6-8.
2. Locke, John Some thoughts concerning education p.74.
3. Shore, J. Memoirs p.13.
4. Op. cit. p.17.

reading by candlelight and of the glaring Indian sun.[1] But this physical disability, instead of making him nervous, made him all the more determined to read and learn. Once at Harrow he was advised by a doctor to leave the school to save his eyesight. At this he was most upset and urged that he should be allowed to stay, and he arranged to have his friends read to him.[2]

This accident, which was to be followed by another at the age of nine, when he broke his thigh and spent a year in bed, perhaps made his mother more protective towards her son and she came to live near him both when he was at Harrow and at Oxford.[3] The relationship between the mother and son was very close; he spent many evenings at her house in Oxford,[4] where he could bring his friends, and he would take her with him during his holidays.[5] On her death in 1780 he wrote "I have no parent left but my country, and am in a disposition to serve that second parent at any hazard, especially as my

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1. Letter to George Hardynge, 24.9.1788 as published in Shore, J. Memoirs p.320

2. This anecdote was given by Rev. David Roderick to John Johnstone. See The Works of Samuel Parr Vol.I.p.15.

3. A.B. Vol.I.pp.447-448.

4. Letter to George John, 11.11.1768. Spencer papers.

5. W.J. to G.J. 9.7.1771. Spencer papers.

dear departed mother loved and taught me to love the rights and liberties of my countrymen while she detested and taught me to detest the abettors of unconstitutional power".[1]

He joined Harrow at Michaelmas 1753. The public school left a deep mark on his character. His progress was slow at first and even slower when he joined his old form after a year of absence because of his broken thigh. The year in bed was not totally wasted, as he read the works of Pope and Dryden and was encouraged by his mother to write verses imitating them. But when he went back to school he was expected to keep pace with his old classmates and when he failed to do so he was severely punished. The story of the rather brutal corporal punishment which Jones underwent on this occasion was remembered in the school tradition well into the nineteenth century.[2] It had a much more lasting effect on the boy than the master intended. Jones grew up alienated from authority and he himself was conscious of it.

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1. Letter to Lady Georgiana, 5.5.1780. Spencer papers.

2. "The boys to this day hold that master in abhorrence, who placed him in the shell in the quondam companions of the fourth form; and punished him while there for stupidity because he had not kept pace with them while confined to sick bed from and after their remove". A.B. Vol.I.pp.447-448.

Shore writes that "the accumulation of punishment for his inability to soar before he had been taught to fly (I use his own expression) might have rendered the feelings callous; and a sense of the injustice attending the infliction of it was calculated to destroy the respect due to magisterial authority and its influence over the scholar".[1] This experience probably led him to identify what he called "the evil principle of feudal system",[2] with the authorities at the school who unjustly punished him. But Jones's alienation was never complete; he did not grow up to hate the system altogether. In fact he recommended a public school education for his pupil and friend George John Spencer (Lord Althorp, later the second Earl Spencer); "Take my word for it, my dear Lord, you will always have reason to be glad that you were bred at the public school and you will thank me for the part I took in recommending that mode of education".[3]

But his alienation from authority and the love of independence which he probably acquired from his mother made him an "outsider" and a nonconformist. The formal education did not satisfy the curiosities of the boy.

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1. Shore, J. Memoirs p.17.
2. A speech to the assembled inhabitants of the counties of Middlesex and Surrey. P. Works. Vol. I. pp. 556-59
3. Letter to George John. 20.11.1771. Spencer papers.

Though he ~~seem~~ excelled in Latin and Greek, and after his first few years at school composed verses imitating Virgil and Sophocles, he soon turned his attention to books and subjects outside the curriculum. He learned Hebrew, French and Italian and taught himself the Arabic script. His leisure time was spent in inventing games which involved intellectual rather than physical exercise. While others were in the playgrounds he spent his time in arranging his army as the King of Arcadia, disputing in syllogism, or displaying oratory in the fields of Harrow.[1] It is not surprising to find him flattered by the title of "great scholar"[2] given to him by his fellow pupils.

The study of the classics left a deep imprint on the boy's mind. Jones admired the ancient literature and always desired to imitate the Greeks and Romans.[3]

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1. Johnstone, J. The Works of Samuel Parr. Vol.I. pp.12-14.

2. Shore, J. Memoirs p.21.

3. "From my earliest years I was charmed with the poetry of the Greeks; nothing I then thought could be more sublime than the odes of Pindar, nothing sweeter than Anacreon, nothing more polished or elegant than the golden remains of Sapho". Letter to C. Reviczky. n.d. as published in Shore, J. Memoirs p.44.

Among his friends at Harrow were William Bennet, Bishop of Cloyne, Samuel Parr, Prebendary of St. Paul's and curate of Hutton, and John Parnell, Chancellor of the Exchequer of Ireland. They were all known at Harrow for their exceptional abilities, and they all loved and admired Jones. "He was always an uncommon boy.... I loved him and revered him and though one or two years older than he was, was always instructed by him from my earliest age".[1] This is what William Bennet wrote to William Shipley, the Dean of St. Asaph in November 1795. Similarly John Parnell wrote to the widow of Sir William Jones: "He gave very early proof of his possessing very extraordinary abilities.... His time being employed to his study, prevented him joining those plays and amusements which occupied the time of his other school fellows".[2]

Perhaps the admiration of his fellow pupils and the encouragement of his mother ~~encouraged~~ stimulated his independent spirit and gave him a self confidence which later allowed him to move freely in fields unknown and to become a manager of men. But this independence and self confidence made him ambitious and somewhat indifferent to personal pain

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1. Shore, J. Memoirs p.21.

2. Op. cit. p.28.

and pleasure. To him life was not worth living without tangible achievements, so he thought it better to die before falling from fame. "I cannot help thinking", he wrote to his sister on the death of a friend, "any grief upon a person's death, very superfluous, inconsistent with sense.... How happy must he be who takes the reward of his excellences, without the possibility of falling away from them and losing the virtue which he professed, on whose character death has fixed a kind of seal, and placed him out of reach of vice and infamy".[1] When in 1780 he was urged by his schoolfellow Samuel Parr to take steps to save the life of their French master, Henri, who had been sentenced to death in France, Jones wrote: "To a man who is poor and wise without any chance of being richer, or a man who is rich and foolish without any chance of being wiser, life can administer no comfort and consequently is no advantage; but a man who is both poor and mad without any hopes of becoming easy in his circumstances or of recovering his understanding can

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1. Shore, J. Memoirs p.23.

receive no greater benefit then death".[1]

This did not prevent him from being kind to others. He took up the cause of a poor musician in Bath, who had been sent to prison for an unpaid debt of seven pounds. He repeatedly declared that he followed his profession in order to serve the cause of the poor; "I may say truly and I hope not arrogantly that while I wear gown, no helpless or injured person of any nation shall want an advocate without fee in any of our courts".[2] This led him to take up the cause of the indebted prisoners in India.[3] But such kindness was very impersonal, rather dictated from the urge to "do good" to the downtrodden than from any real love for them. After he

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1. Letter to S. Parr. n.d. as published in The Works of Samuel Parr Vol.VII.p.210.

   He was rather consistent in this attitude. On the death of Dr. Sumner, the headmaster of Harrow, he told William Bennet: "You will think more highly of my sincerity than my gratitude when I tell you that I was not so deeply affected with the loss of Sumner as you seem to be. My confidence in him had been considerably decreased for the last three years, and I began to take less pleasure in his company than ever. As for himself he had too many misfortunes to make life any longer desirable". Letter to W. Bennet 10.11.1777 as published in The Works of Samuel Parr Vol.I.p.54.

2. Letter to Lady Georgiana 28.2.1774. Spencer papers.

3. Letter to William Pitt 5.2.1785. Joseph ~~South~~ Smith's papers H.M.C. 12R.pt.9.pp.344-345.

had managed to save the life of his Syrian friend, Mirza, he wrote to Lady Georgiana: "I assure your ladyship, that I look upon it as a cause gained and take it as a favourable omen for my future labours as an advocate in the course of which it will be my chief happiness to dedicate my imperfect talents to the relief of the distressed".[1]

II.

In 1764, when he was 17, Jones went to Oxford; he was admitted to University College as a commoner. His father's legal friends advised against sending him to Oxford, and would have preferred him to study for the Bar. But the boy had no interest then in the Law at this stage. He much preferred to study classics and his master Dr. Sumner encouraged him in this pursuit.[2]

For the greater part of the eighteenth century the history of Oxford is very dull. It is the history of a small society "where disillusioned Jacobites and half-hearted Hanoverians contended with each other".[3] To men with new ideas and dissenting views it was a stifling

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1. Letter to Lady Georgiana 2.5.1774. Spencer papers.
2. Shore, J. Memoirs pp.26-27.
3. Mallet, C.E. A history of the University of Oxford. Vol.III.p.2.

place; in 1768 even the followers of John Wesley were expelled.[1] Most men found the university lifeless and the teaching uninteresting. Gibbon described his stay in Oxford as, "the most idle and unprofitable of my whole life".[2] Samuel Johnson, who was at Pembroke, thought that his tutor's lectures in logic were not worth half the twopenny fine imposed for missing them. Such sentiments were echoed by Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham.[3]

At first Jones was not happy with the situation in Oxford; he complained that he was required to attend dull lectures on artificial ethics and logic, detailed in such barbarous Latin that he professed to know as little of it as he knew of Arabic.[4] However later he was allowed to pursue his studies independently, and he widened his horizon. After gaining further knowledge in classics he turned his attention to Oriental studies.

The University was famous for Oriental scholarship, which goes back to the days of Edward Pococke who became the first Professor of Arabic in 1636. At the time of Jones

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1. Mallet, C.E. A history of the University of Oxford Vol.III.p.123.

2. Gibbon, E. Memoirs of my life p.150.

3. Mallet, C.E. Op.cit. p.2.

4. Shore, J. Memoirs p.32. This complaint must have been made in the second year at the University for according to Laudian Statutes, ethics and logic were taught in the second year. Goldley, A.D. Oxford in the eighteenth century p.3.

perhaps the best known Oriental scholar was Joseph White of Wadham, who was Professor of Arabic and afterwards of Hebrew. Among his works the Institutes of Temour is well known.[1] But in spite of this tradition the students did not get much help in their Oriental pursuits. Gibbon bitterly complained of how he was discouraged from learning Arabic.[2] Jones was first incited to learn this language by a fellow student, though he needed little encouragement as he had already learnt the Arabic script at Harrow and was inclined to traverse unknown fields. But he learnt Arabic not from the University teachers but from Mirza, a Syrian whom he had met in London and whom he brought to Oxford. A part of each morning was spent with Mirza in retranslating One thousand and one nights.[3] His attention was soon drawn to Persian as he found "a near connection between the modern Persian and Arabic".[4] He soon mastered

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1. Mallet C.E. A history of the University of Oxford Vol.II. p.310 and Vol.III.p.126.

2. Gibbon, E. Memoirs of my life pp.61-62.

3. Shore, J. Memoirs p.33.

4. Op.cit. It is interesting to note that Jones had no idea of linguistic groupings as it was were then known in Europe. See infra pp.165-167.

the two languages and by 1768 he had become well known as an Orientalist.[1]

But learning classical and Oriental languages was not the end of his education; he regularly attended classes in riding and fencing and his vacations were spent in improving his mastery over modern languages. This is how Milton wanted young men to be educated, a combination of the education of a gentleman and that of a man of letters, to learn as much about things that matter as about the "wisdom of the ancients". This is the education which Jones was to recommend for his pupil and which he himself tried to follow.[2]

Independently minded as he was, he was often at odds with the authorities at Oxford. In 1768, when he received his B.A., he had to endure the convocation ceremony which he called "the most ridiculous thing imaginable".[3] Yet he went through the ceremony as custom required. In 1773 during the four days of the Encaenia celebrations Jones was asked to address the University but "when I showed them my oration, they thought it not flattering enough and I soon found that they expected a

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1. Shore, J. Memoirs. p. 33.
2. Letter to Lady Georgiana 3.9.1768. Spencer papers. cf. Milton John Of Education pp.3-6.
3. Letter to George John. 11.11.1768. Spencer papers.

very different kind of speech from what I intended to give them, which determined me not to speak at all, and I had no cause to repent of my silence, for most of the compositions, that were repeated, were so full of flattery that my bold strain would hardly have met with a favourable reception".[1] This shows that he was unable to adapt himself fully to the accepted norms of the University. Yet he was not totally alienated from Oxford. His attitude towards the institutions of the "Establishment" was rather ambivalent; he disliked the ridiculous ceremonies and he complained of the lack of freedom in them, yet he recommended public school education as the best mode of education for an Englishman and defended the University whenever he felt it necessary. He attacked Anquétil Duperron, the French Orientalist who ridiculed Oxford scholarship, chiefly to discredit "the French nation".[2] He even thought of residing permanently in Oxford, had he failed to obtain his judgeship in Bengal, and he intended to donate all his Oriental manuscripts to the University.[3] In 1780 he wanted to represent the

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1. Letter to George John, 23.7.1773. Spencer papers.

2. Letter to C. Reviczky, Dec.1771. as published in Shore, J. Memoirs p.101. Also see infra p.58.

3. Letter to E. Burke 17.3.1782. Burke papers, Wentworth Muniments, Sheffield.

Alma Mater in Parliament.[1]

The pursuit of the education of a gentleman and a scholar proved to be too expensive. He was elected a Bennet scholar in 1764 but the stipend was a modest sum ~~which could~~ and hardly ~~meet~~ met his expenses, which included fees for fencing and riding lessons, and maintaining Mirza in Oxford. In 1765 he was offered a post as a tutor in the Spencer family, to teach young George John, then seven years old. Jones had no alternative but to accept the offer, and in the summer of that year he went to stay at Wimbledon Park to take charge of the boy. A year later he was elected to the Bennet Fellowship at University College, but he had then grown fond of George John and so he continued at the same time as his tutor.[2] The relationship between tutor and pupil was friendly and informal. From the very start Jones discarded all formalities,-"drop all formalities" was a much repeated phrase in his correspondence. The mother, Lady Georgiana Spencer, recognised this. "He now loves you as his friend", she wrote to Jones, "which is surely much better than fearing you as a master".[3]

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1. See infra pp.112-114

2. Shore, J. Memoirs p.35.

3. Letter from Lady Georgiana. 22.7.1764. Spencer papers.

Thus started a friendship which lasted until the end of Jones's life. He drafted a plan for the education of his pupil, which was to include the study of words (meaning, languages and literature) and the study of things (material affairs).[1] He continued to put his plan into practice even after he had ceased to be his tutor. His early correspondence was more a mode of instruction than a matter of mere courtesy.

His letters were written in the same way as Cicero wrote to his friend Atticus. "Cicero's letters are the most beautiful models of epistolery writing,.. you will be charmed with them. I was going to say you are my Atticus but you will be a man as superior to Atticus as I shall be inferior to Cicero".[2] His repeated advice to his young pupil was to distinguish himself: "from the mob of noblemen and consider birth fortune and so forth as nothing more than steps by which you may climb more rapidly into the temple of virtue which is far above them all".[3] He discouraged George John from indulging too much in ordinary recreations such as hunting, dancing and music.[4]

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1. Letter to Lady Georgiana. 3.9.1768. Spencer papers.
2. Letter to George John. 24.6.1774. Spencer papers.
3. W.J. to G.J.S. 20.9.1775.
4. W.J. to G.J.S. 1.1.1774.

These recreations should never be permitted to engage too much of an Englishman's time, since he "has so many accomplishments to learn and so many duties to perform to his friends, to his country and to the whole race of man".[1]

Among the works he recommended the young man to study were those of Cicero and Demosthenes: "If all the ancient books were destroyed except Demosthenes and Cicero, I should be contented with them alone".[2] Three other authors whom he recommended to Lady Georgiana for her son were Euclid, Locke and Blackstone, for "the first will open to him the principles of all natural knowledge, the second will show him the natural extent of human reason and the third will offer to him a specimen of that reason reduced to practice in the admirable laws of our country".[3]

This love for classical literature led him to love what he called the "ancient wisdom", which found expression in contemporary Whig philosophy and the English constitution. What he considered most sacred was the "Englishman's liberty". He persuaded George John to his ideas about the English constitution, liberty and the

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1. ~~W.J. to G.J.S.~~ Letter to George John. 26.12.1774.
2. W.J. to G.J.S. 23.4.1773.
3. Letter to Lady Georgiana 26.2.1773. Spencer papers.

American Revolution. He also hoped that the time would come "when there will be less interruption to our friendship, when we shall be able to confer together about the great interest of our country, when you in the Senate and I at the Bar, shall endeavour to deserve well of mankind, by ensuring and promoting their happiness. The difference of twelve years will soon disappear and we shall both be young men together".[1]

Jones had a definite faith in Christianity but his advice was to avoid controversies over theology and metaphysics. "If you think with me you will not trouble yourself with such objections as Gibbon or anybody else can make",[2] he advised his friend. To Jones the best way to serve God was through one's work and not by entering into theological controversy; "surely the elegance of ancient poetry and rhetoric, the contemplation of God's works and God's ways, the respectable task of making boys learned and men virtuous may employ the forty or fifty years you have to live, more serenely, more laudably, more profitably, than the vain warfare of controversial divinity".[3]

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1. Letter to George John. 2.11.1773.
2. Letter to George John. 4.11.1776. Spencer papers.
3. Letter to Samuel Parr. 19.7.1779. as published in The Works of Samuel Parr Vol.I.p.110.

These instructions were carried out in person even after Jones left the Spencer family. He used to visit George John at Harrow, where the boy had been sent in 1769. There they would eat a fowl together at the King's Head and discuss George John's prospects for Parliament.[1] The young man lived up to Jones's expectations and became first Lord of the Admiralty during the Napoleonic Wars. In later life he left politics and spent his time as Jones would have liked, "in a studious and tranquil retirement".[2]

III

The connection with the Spencer family proved to be very fruitful for Jones's career. He moved freely among the higher orders of society. At Wimbledon in the summer of 1766 he was offered a post as interpreter of Oriental languages by the Duke of Grafton, but he declined it.[3] Again in spring 1768 Sutton, the under-secretary of the Duke, contacted him with the request that he should translate a Persian manuscript, a history of Nadir Shah brought to England by Christian

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1. Letter to George John 8.4.1774. Spencer papers.
2. Letter to Lady Georgiana 6.10.1791. Spencer papers.
3. Shore, J. Mémoirs p. 36.

VII of Denmark.[1] This translation established him in Europe as an Orientalist. Through the Spencer family he met Count Reviczky,[2] a Hungarian diplomat and Orientalist, in the spring of 1768. This was the beginning of a friendship which lasted till the end of his life.

In summer 1766 he met Anna Maria Shipley, the daughter of Jonathan Shipley, Dean of Winchester and later Bishop of St. Asaph. She was a regular visitor to the family, being related to Lady Georgiana, Lord Macartney, the Governor of Madras met her[3] at Wimbledon. Jones was soon attracted to her, but being cautious and ambitious he knew he would not have enough income "to be independent and married."[4] He had to wait until October 1782, when he had some prospect of gaining the judgeship in India, to propose to her. He found in Anna Maria all the qualities he wanted in a woman: "I look upon equality to

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1. Shore, J. Memoirs p.40

2. Charles Reviczky (1737-1793) an Orientalist. A Treatise on Turkey (1769) and the Fragments from Persian Literature were his most well known works.

3. Macartney to "my dearest friend" 12.10.1783 as published in C. Collin Davies The private correspondence of Lord Macartney p.223.

4. Letter to Lady Georgiana.23.11.1782. Spencer papers cf. Shore J. Memoirs p.37.

be the best foundation of happiness in private as well as national society, good sense and good temper, agreeable manners, a feeling heart, domestick affections, knowledge of the world and contempt of what is wrong in it--- these were the qualities which I ever sought, and have not I trust, sought in vain. I believe some years ago, that I had found them in Miss Shipley".[1]

From 1766 onwards he grew very fond of the Shipley family and was a regular visitor to their home in Chilbolton. Through the Bishop of St. Asaph he came to know the radicals and the supporters of the American Revolution, among whom was Benjamin Franklin, the "sage of Passy" as he was called. Jones visited him several times in Paris.

But, nonconformist and outsider as he was, he did not fit well into the upper strata of society. He described his position as a "philosopher among courtiers", a "lark or nightingale in a menagerie of peacocks or Indian peafowls".[2] He avoided social occasions and spent most of his time in his study, reading until late at night and drinking coffee. "You are now sleeping and I hope dreaming of your verses or something agreeable as

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1. Letter to George John. 27.10.1782.

2. Letter to George John. 26.12.1774.

for me though it is midnight the briskness of my fire and the still silence of the house tempt me to sit reading an hour longer".[1]

In Althorp, the home of the Spencer family, he spent most of his time within the walls of the library, away from the usual amusements that went with the life in high circles. It is natural that he should be described, "as one who locked himself up all day and took no part in the amusements that usually employ young men".[2] This was also noticed by Reviczky who advised his friend to take more interest in life. Jones however disagreed that he was shy and unworldly: "Do not however imagine that I despise the usual enjoyments of youth; no one takes more delight in singing and dancing than I do, nor in the moderate use of wine, nor in the exquisite beauty of the ladies, of whom London affords an enchanting variety."[3] He enjoyed riding and fencing and found dancing quite agreeable. He frequented the

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1. ~~W.J. to G.J.~~ Letter to George John (26.1.)1771.

2. Letter to Lady Georgiana 27.8.1768. Spencer papers. When Jones heard that this is how Lady Spencer had described him to a common friend, he wrote to say that had he known his behaviour had caused her uneasiness he would have bidden farewell to his studies.

3. Letter to C. Reviczky March 1771 as published in Shore, J. Memoirs p.93.

residences of Lady Lucan and Mrs. Vesey who according to Horace Walpole used to collect "all graduates and candidates to fame, where they vie with one another, till they are as unintelligible as the good folks at Babel".[1] The Duchess of Devonshire, the sister of George John, was among his friends. But he would soon grow tired of parties and other social occasions, and would long to get away from them. His holidays in Bath and Margate were spent reading law, classics and logic, or in riding and bathing alone. He generally avoided meeting people: "My days are constantly spent in bathing in the sea, riding on the shore or reading in my study; as for dancing it is almost incompatible with swimming which would hardly be safe if the body were not cool and though I still love a good dance yet I must confess that I prefer the company of Nereids to the ladies at a dance".[2]

In 1769, when most of the higher orders gathered at Stratford upon Avon to celebrate the bicentenary of Shakespeare's birth, he went alone to visit Milton's desolate house at Forest Hill, near Oxford. Milton was

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1. Horace Walpole to Lady Ossory 14.1.1781. Correspondence vol.29,f.n.p.36.

2. Letter to George John 6.9.1774. Spencer papers.

another of his heroes, the "most perfect scholar" and "sublimest poet that our country ever produced".[1] A month earlier he told his friend that he was inclined to go to Stratford, "for I want very much to hear Mr. Garrick speak the recitation part of his ode but to say the truth I have no great inclination to take as much trouble as I shall be forced to take about dress and other foppiness".[2]

As the private tutor of young Lord Althorp he accompanied the family in their trips to the Continent. The last one was to Nice, during the winter of 1769-70. He soon grew tired of merely teaching George John and escorting the ladies on their walks and sightseeing trips. He wrote to Nathaniel Halhead, who later became famous as the author of Gentoo Laws: "I cannot describe to you how weary I am of this place, nor my anxiety to be again at Oxford when I might jest with you and philosophise with Poore".[3] This feeling of loneliness was a persistent mood in Jones's correspondence from Nice. "I am disgusted with the odious rattle of French gaity and the calm serenity of an Italian sky has something gloomy in it", he wrote to Reviczky. He would much rather have been in

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1. Letter to Lady Georgiana 7.9.1769. as published in Shore J. Memoirs p.69.

2. Letter to George John 17.8.1769. Spencer papers.

3. Letter to N. Halhead 1.3.1770. as published in Shore, J. Memoirs p.74.

Vienna, "where I might enjoy your conversation, philosophise with you, trifle away our idle hours or explore with you the hidden treasures of poetry".[1] A storm, which had long been brewing, broke and abruptly brought an end to his career as a tutor. It was not "French gaity" nor the "gloomy Italian sky" which bothered him, but it was his position as a domestic tutor which really irritated him most. "I never would listen to any proposals of being a domestic tutor in any family, a character which I always thought far below one whose natural freedom of mind renders him incapable of bearing the least restraint of inattention".[2]

The quarrel with the Spencers broke over the interruptions in the career of young George John at Harrow. Lady Georgiana, like many other anxious mothers, was unwilling to send her son back to school when she thought that he was not fully fit and well, and that the weather at Harrow would not suit him. Jones insisted that the boy should attend the school regularly as the public school education gave the highest advantages. Failing that, he should be given a private education under Jones's supervision. He proposed that a house

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1. Letter to Reviczky (April/May)1770 as published in Shore, J. Memoirs pp.75-78.

2. Letter to Lady Georgiana 10.10.1770. Spencer papers.

should be built where "I may pursue my plan without being turned from it by the avocations of a family".[1] This was not possible, so Jones resigned. "My love for liberty is such that I would not only quit my private family to preserve it, and would even leave my country if I felt my freedom endangered and should be happier with liberty in a desert or rock than with any other advantage in the palace of a King".[2] In fact this love of liberty and his dislike of his position as a "domestic tutor" perhaps induced him to contemplate leaving the Spencers even before the quarrel over the question of sending George John to Harrow started. On 19 September 1770 he enrolled at the Middle Temple, nine days before he abruptly left Wimbledon, where he never returned as a tutor.[3] Luckily for Jones and for us this quarrel did not result in a complete break with the Spencer family; he remained friendly with both mother and son and corresponded with them regularly until the end of his life.

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1. Letter to Lady Georgiana.10.10.1770. Spencer papers.

2. Letter to John, the first Earl Spencer 22.10.1770. Spencer papers.

3. On 28 September Jones suddenly left Wimbledon leaving the following note for Lady Georgiana which sparked off the quarrel, "Lord Althorp's education is not settled as much as his health, at present he is as much to be pitied as he is amiable". Letter to Lady Georgiana. 28.9.1770.

This act of resignation was considered very extraordinary by the men of the eighteenth century, accustomed to a world of sinecure and patronage.[1]

The four years which followed were years of both hard work and success. Most of his time was spent in Oxford and London studying law and writing many works including Histoire de Nader Chah and his Persian Grammar. He soon rose to fame. On 30 April 1772 he was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society, as a linguist and an Orientalist,[2] and in 1773 he was admitted to that most exclusive club of Samuel Johnson which met regularly at the Turk's Head in Soho.[3]

He modelled his life on Cicero and chose law and politics as his career. "If you wish to know my occupations," he wrote to Bennet, "read the beginning of Middleton's Cicero".[4]

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1. Horace Walpole to William Mason 19.5.1786. Correspondence Vol.29.p.36.

2. Shore, J. Memoirs p.110

3. Jones was elected a member on 2 April 1773, without any difficulty, whereas even Garrick, the famous actor, had trouble to gain admission. Annals of the Club 1764-1914 pp.8-10.

4. Letter to William Bennet 10.11(1771) as published in The Works of Samuel Parr Vol.I.p55.

Cicero's life was to be followed closely. A typical day would include a visit to Parliament, meetings with friends at Alice's coffee house at Westminster Hall, where the lawyers and members of Parliament met regularly, a call at Lady Spencer's house at St. James Place, and an hour's study of law at the Temple; "thus have I passed my day and thus did Cicero at my age pass his".[1]

In 1774 he was called to the Bar and in the spring of 1775 he left London to attend the circuit in Oxford and Wales as a Junior Pleader. Throughout the journey he carried out his "forensick campaigns" successfully, and saved four men from capital punishment. He wrote in a moment of undue optimism: "My profession will in due time give as great a share of the labour and advantages of this world as I shall know what to do with".[2] These "forensick campaigns" in Oxford and Wales were carried out every spring and summer of his last years in England, and Jones remained a very busy man. But although he saved many more lives and gained pleasure in helping the distressed, he generally found that his income was not enough to meet all his expenses. He was apprehensive

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1. Letter to George John (Feb)1775. Spencer papers.
2. Letter to George John 14.4.1775. Spencer papers.

about this even before he started: "The profession of the Law without some other is a tree that bears fruit only in twenty years".[1] So Jones searched in high places for a secure post. Early in 1775, when he learned that Eden, the Secretary to Lord Suffolk, was to resign, he immediately wrote to Lady Georgiana Spencer asking her to use her influence to secure the post for him.[2] Again on 16 May 1775, when he heard at a dance that the Duke of Devonshire wanted an auditor, he left the ball and at 2 a.m. wrote a long letter urging Lady Spencer to put in a good word in his favour.[3] But unfortunately he was unsuccessful in gaining a post.

The years that followed were marked by frustrating attempts to alleviate his financial difficulties, and to raise his social status. No doubt he was by then the best known English Orientalist, whose works were read throughout Europe. He was a friend of men like Samuel Johnson, Edmund Burke, and Edward Gibbon, all of whom respected him for his scholarship and his independence.[4]

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1. Letter to Lady Georgiana. 28.2.1775. Spencer papers.
2. Letter to Lady Georgiana. 28.2.1775. Spencer papers.
3. Letter to Lady Georgiana. 17.5.1775.
4. Johnson said that Jones taught him "modesty and Greek". See Life of Johnson Vol.IV.p.433.

But his ambition was not satisfied and his fame did not bring him sufficient money. He took an active part in the Club[1] and persuaded his friends to join.[2] But as the years passed he attended it less frequently[3] and grew tired of even Johnson[4] and Burke. Perhaps it was in desperation that in 1780 he made his unsuccessful attempt to gain a seat in Parliament. So it was natural that he should look to an Indian judgeship with a hope of saving money and gaining prestige, "although my professional gains are very handsome and are continually increasing, yet I must be twenty years in England before I can save as much as in India. I might easily lay by in five or six (sic); and on my return (if it pleases God to permit me) I might still be a young man with thirty thousand pounds in my pocket. So I might proceed at the Bar or in Parliament with ease to myself and perhaps with advantage to others".[5]

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1. Jones presided over the meeting on 9 May 1780 when the rules were changed. ~~See~~ Annals of the Club plate III.

2. Jonathan Shipley and Lord Althorp. ~~See~~ Letter to George John 30.11.1778. Spencer papers.

3. Annals of the Club p.9.

4. He remarked about Samuel Johnson to Parr: "My ideas of philology are so faded, and other habits of study begin so strongly to prevail, that I have no great pleasure in his conversation". Letter to S. Parr 22.3.(1774) as published in The Works of Samuel Parr Vol.VII.p.206.

5. Letter to Lady Georgiana 24.5.1778. Spencer papers.

Chapter III

Early Ideas about India and the Orient

Two forces ultimately led Jones to India. One was his ambitious character which made him desirous to be independent of patronage. He left the Spencers, took up law to alleviate his financial difficulties, and tried to raise his social status by gaining a seat in Parliament. But failing to gain much success in either of these pursuits, he turned to an Indian judgeship with a hope of saving money and gaining social prestige.[1] The other force which induced him to go East was his love for Oriental literature. He saw that he would have scope to improve his Oriental studies if he could live in the country itself. As early as 1771 he expressed his desire to his friend Count Reviczky,[2] "whenever the war with Russia is at an end, I propose to making an open and direct application for the office of minister at Constantinople; at present I can only privately whisper my wishes. The king is very well disposed towards me; so perhaps are the men in power; and the Turkish company wish

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1. Supra p.51 Infra pp 118-122.

2. Letter to Count Reviczky Dec. 1771., as published in Shore, J. Memoirs pp.101-102.

much to oblige me; all I have to apprehend is the appearance of some powerful competitor who may drive me off the stage. If I shall succeed in my wishes how shall I bound for joy! First I shall enjoy your company at Vienna, then I shall explore the Turkish manners in their most hidden sources". Whether in fact he applied or not we do not know, but this letter shows that as early as in 1771 he entertained the idea of going East to improve his knowledge of the Asian literature.

The period of thirteen years between 1770 and 1783 was very fruitful both in the numbers of works[1] produced and in gaining a foothold in high society. He wrote many works and at least nine of them were connected with Orientalism and it was his fame as an Orientalist which made it easy for him to become a member of the very exclusive club of Johnson in 1773, and a Fellow of the

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1. 1. Histoire de Nader Chah, London. 2. A Grammar of the Persian languages, London. 3. Dissertation sur la litterature Orientale. 4. Lettre à Monsieur A... du P... . 5. Poems consisting chiefly of translations from the Asiatic languages. 6. The history of the life of Nader Shah. 7. Poeseos Asiaticae Commentariorum. 8. The Muhammadan Law of Succession. 9. Moallakat or seven Arabian Poems. In the Law of Bailments (a pioneering work in the field of comparative law), Jones made a comparative study of the laws of Bailments in various countries including those of the East.

Royal Society of Britain. So we should not attach much importance to the following rather dramatic statement, "but my friend the die is cast and I have no longer a choice, all my books and manuscripts with an exception of those only which relate to law and oratory are locked up at Oxford and I have determined for the next twenty years at least to renounce all studies but those which are connected with my profession".[1] These years are in fact very important in the evolution of Jones's ideas of the East and its culture and history, as they are related to his conception of history and culture in general.

We have already noticed how Jones was influenced by the works of Cicero and how he imitated his style of correspondence in his letters to his friends.[2] In his historical writings he also tried to follow the rules for the perfect historian, as laid down by Cicero in his treatise on the Orator.[3] According to this, a historian should be not only truthful and free from bias, but also a shrewd judge of all public transactions, and should write elegantly and copiously. Jones realised that this was just an idea "to which the works of human genius are

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1. Letter to H. A. Shultens Oct. 1774. Shore, J. Memoirs p.122.

2. Supra p. 31.

3. Works. Vol.12. pp.321-322.

constantly tending, though like the logarithmick spiral, they will never meet the point to which they are infinitely approaching".[1] This is the reason why no historian satisfies all the rules laid down by Cicero. Jones found that the very essence of history, "truth", is not present in the writings of so many historians, ancient or modern, European or Asiatic,- "which we can read without asking in almost every page, 'is this true'?".[2] Most historians do not possess all the qualities that go to make a perfect one, "some of them are grave and judicious, some bold and impartial, others polished and elegant; but none of them seem to have possessed all those qualities, a perfect union of which is required in the character of a finished historian".[3] Thus, though Herodotus was an example of a noble simplicity, his accounts of Persian affairs are "at least doubtful if not fabulous".[4] Thucydides on the other hand described facts which were in general "authentick", and his observations were "deep" and "sagacious" but he wrote in a "poor language".[5] The defective style of

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1. Works Vol.12.p.323.
2. Op.cit. p.324.
3. Op.cit. p.328.
4. Op.cit. p.325.
5. Op.cit.

Tacitus, "prevents us from considering him as a consummate historian though his wisdom and penetration would otherwise give him a just claim to that title".[1] Among the moderns he found Voltaire most agreeable, "his style is lively and spirited his descriptions animated and striking, his remarks always ingenious, often deep", but his periods are not sufficiently expanded, he is inclined to unnecessary brevity and his wit is often ill-placed, "he cannot give an abstract of the Newtonian philosophy without interspersing it with strokes of humour".[2]

Jones was well aware that, judged by the Ciceronian standards of a complete historian, he himself could hardly claim the title of historian. "I am like the drop of water, in the fable of Sadi, which fell from a cloud into the sea, lost in the consciousness of its own insignificance. The chief merit of the book (that is his English version of the History of the life of Nader Shah) if it has any, consists in exhibiting in one view the transactions of sixty years in the finest part of Asia".[3] This desire to write rather the essence of history than to give minute descriptions of facts is also reflected in his other works

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1. Works Vol.12.p.327.
2. Op.cit. p.328-31.
3. Op.cit. p.342.

such as A short history of Persia, or The history of the Persian language.[1] A short history of Persia was an abstract of the history of Persia, following the extinct plan of Atticus as mentioned by Cicero. In it Jones's aim was to catch the general and striking features of truth in history.[2] He discarded facts which he considered dull or false "as nothing should be related merely because it is true if it be not instructive or entertaining".[3] He divided the history of Persia into four periods, ruled by four celebrated dynasties. It seems implicit that Jones considered these the four most enlightened periods in history because they are connected with four stages in the growth of Persian literature.[4] In this respect he followed Voltaire and what Collingwood[5] called the "historiography of the Enlightenment". Like Voltaire Jones divided history into periods, and was interested more in the "truth" or "essence" in history than in the facts. The

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1. These two tracts were first published together with his History of the life of Nader Shah in 1773.

2. Works Vol.12.pp.346-348. The plan of Atticus is to be found in Cicero's on Oratory.

3. Op.cit. pp.347-348.

4. Op.cit. Vol.5.p.410.

5. Collingwood, R.G. The Idea of History 1961 pp.76-78.

only facts which mattered in history were the instructive ones like the story of Sheik Sefi who by the use of his charms freed the Carmanian slaves from Timur.[1]

This Short History and the History of the Persian language are full of errors and Jones did not live up to his own standard. He rejected the existence of any literature before the Sassanian kings and called the work of Anquétil-Duperron fraudulent. This attack was made in a published letter in defence of the Orientalists of Oxford University.[2] This attack on Anquétil-Duperron was renewed in his History of the Persian language. It is now universally recognised that Jones was wrong in rejecting Anquétil-Duperron's Zen Avesta and in not recognising the existence of a pre-Sassanian Persian literature and his attitude was not in the best of taste.[3] He rejected the historicity of Zoraster not only because he was blinded by his dislike of Anquétil-Duperron's attack on Oxford but also because the theory did not fit in with his idea of history. In the first two periods the language

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1. Works Vol.12.p.434.

2. Lettre a Monsieu A... du P....

3. Browne E. A literary history of Persia, Vol.1. pp.49-56. cf. Waley, Arthur ~~Waley has written an article~~ Anquétil-Duperron and Sir William Jones in History Today Vol.2.pp.23-33 on this. All these writers have somewhat neglected Jones's attack on Anquétil-Duperron in his History of the Persian language.

was not polished, though the Persians were not entirely strangers to the art of composition either in verse or in prose, but it only reached maturity and elegance in the Sassanian period when an Academy was founded in Gansisapor.[1] One can trace a vague conception of evolution in this, a gradual growth of language from unpolished to polished; in this process, there are four landmarks making four distinct periods of history. He rejected Anquétil-Duperron because he could not bear the idea that an elegant and ancient language could be actually spoken by people who did not lead an enlightened life;-"From this we may reasonably conclude that the gibberish of these swarthy vagabonds whom we often see brooding over a miserable fire under the hedges may as well be taken for old Egyptian and the beggars themselves for the priests of Isis as the jugglers on the coast of India for the disciples of Zoraster, and their barbarous dialect for the ancient language of Persia".[2]

From Cicero he also learnt to suspect the accumulation of power in one hand. This appealed to his rather rebellious nature and to his dislike of authority. He deplored the cult of great conquerors or warriors, as

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1. Works Vol.5.p.416.

2. Op.cit. p.415.

these men are not great by any standard, their achievements are the effect of the united effort of the multitude, wrongly attributed to one single person, and "true virtue does not consist in destroying our fellow creatures but in protecting them, not in seizing their property but in defending their rights and liberties even at the hazard of our own safety".[1] The boy who grew up to believe that life is not worth living without some tangible achievements and that death is preferable to a worthless life, did not consider love of power and territorial conquest as tangible achievements.[2] In this he exhibited the virtues of the peace-loving middle class, and praised the works of industry and mental ability rather than those of arms and power. This love of power together with lust for dominion has filled the world with terror and misery from Sesostris[3] who invaded Africa and Europe, to the "three mighty potentates who are ravaging Poland. How much more splendid would their glory have been if instead of raising their fame on the subversion of kingdoms they had applied their whole thoughts to the patronage of arts, science,

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1. Works Vol.12.p.314.

2. Supra pp.29-30.

3. He was of the XII dynasty of Egypt, and reigned between 1950-1935 B.C.

letters, agriculture, trade; had made their nations more illustrious in wisdom, extensive in commerce, eminent in riches, firm in virtue, happy in freedom and had chosen rather to be benefactors than the destroyers of the human species".[1] Since wars and military victories are insignificant and conquerors cannot be called great, one would have thought that the life of Nadir Shah would have been the last thing for Jones to translate.

In 1765 Carsten Niebuhr, the Danish traveller and writer, visited Shiraz. There he purchased a Ms. copy of Tārīkh-i-Nādirī, an official history written by Mirza Mahdi. This manuscript was deposited at the Kongelige Bibliotek at Copenhagen.[2] During his visit in 1768 Christian VII, King of Denmark, brought this manuscript to England. He wanted an Englishman to translate this into French. The task fell upon Jones who accepted it very reluctantly, after declining it once, "as it was hinted to him that this will be some mark of distinction to him, and above all it will be a reflection upon his country if the King should be obliged to carry the manuscript to France".[3] The task could not have been as disagreeable as Shore's account, and

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1. Works Vol.12.p.315.
2. Lockhart, L. Nadir Shah p.296.
3. Shore, J. Memoirs p.40.

Jones's own utterances in his letters[1] and works made out, as Jones brought out an English edition of the history in 1773, and in the French translation of 1770[2] there was no mention of his theory of history and his dislike of conquerors and warriors. In 1773 Jones stated in the Preface to The history of the life of Nader Shah that the idea that war and military victories are insignificant and the lives of the conquerors dull, should have deterred him from writing the history unless it had been for the sake of exposing the "most infamously wicked" and of "displaying the charms of liberty" by showing the "odiousness of tyranny and oppression". In this English version, which was mostly his own work based on Mahdi's Tārīkh-i-Nādirī the main character does not appear to be the most "infamously wicked" person and Jones only partially succeeded in showing the "odiousness of tyranny and oppression".[3]

Unlike a modern English historian, Jones did not find in the career of Nadir Shah an example of a peculiar

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1. He wrote to Count Reveczky in July 1770 that the translation of the Life of Nadir Shah was a "most disagreeable task". Shore, J. Memoirs p.81.

2. Histoire de Nader Chah London 1770. The letters concerning the French translation were not added to this edition as Cannon seems to believe (See Cannon, G. Bibliography p.14-15) but were published with the History.

3. Works Vol.12.p.316.

"characteristic of the East" which "has been the periodic bursting forth (appearance is too mild a word) there of great conquerors who overran vast stretches of country ravaging, killing, and destroying".[1] For Jones the territorial conquests, the ravaging, the killing and the destruction were not a specifically Eastern characteristic. These were common to any power anywhere, in Europe and Asia. The idea of the unity of mankind which he got from the Stoic philosophy perhaps through Cicero led him rather to stress the similarities among human civilisations than the differences. That is why he purposely played down the cruelties of Nadir Shah, and had no sympathy for the notion that despotism was peculiar to the Oriental nature. In this he was much nearer to Voltaire's notion that the Asiatic system of government and society was similar to the European feudal system. At this stage he was not converted to the idea of Oriental despotism entertained by Bernier and Montesquieu.[2] He thought that India was ruled under some kind of feudalism[3] and he did not yet pronounce that Indians are precluded from the very idea of freedom.[4] ~~He moved from this position~~ in

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1. Lockhart L. Nadir Shah p.1.
2. Supra p. 15-16.
3. Works Vol.12.pp.389-90.
4. The tenth Discourse. As.R.Vol.IV.pp.7-9

later life he believed that the Oriental system of government ~~and law~~ is fundamentaly opposed to that of Europe. This we will discuss in a later chapter. At this stage he looked for unity rather than for the differences among the various cultures.

Jones's Nadir does not appear to be an Oriental despot, an embodiment of absolute power who ruled without any respect for the populace and the nobility. He compares well with the European rulers in the art of war. Had he lived in better times he would have been a greater patron of arts and learning. Thus Jones's comment on Nadir's appointment of Indian musicians in Persia was, "we cannot help admiring the remarkable disposition of this singular man, who with the fierceness of a warrior had yet a taste for the polite and ornamental arts, and while he was conquering an Empire, had the calmness to think of improving the musick of his own nation".[1] Nadir was in fact his hero; his conquest of India is comparable to that of Alexander. He ransacked the country but treated the Mughal emperor and the Princes of Sind mildly and installed them in their old positions.[2]

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1. The history of the life of Nader Shah p.104.

2. Op.cit. p.38 and pp.92-93.

Like Alexander he too used the artifice of foreseeing victory in dreams to inspire his soldiers and officers.[1] This comparison between Alexander and Nadir Shah had already been made by earlier European writers on the subject.[2] But there is nothing to show that Jones read these works, although he might have got the idea from Mahdi himself, who often compared Nadir with Sikandar Shah (Alexander) and Dara (Darius). Here his attitude can be contrasted with that of Vincent Smith. In Indian history, Smith made the Greek conqueror his hero and seized upon any opportunity he could to exaggerate the cruelties of the Eastern rulers and to prove that they ruled in a very despotic manner.[3] Jones on the other hand found Nadir no more or no less cruel than many of his European counterparts. When he described how Nadir gave orders to tear out the eyes of one of his sons who conspired against him, Jones's only comment was that this action was a "common but inhuman punishment for high crimes in Asia".[4] Jones's Nadir had a mission in life, which was

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1. The history of the life of Nader Shah p.11.

2. J.P. de Bougainville put this idea in his Parallèle de l'Expédition d'Alexandre dans les Indes avec le conquête des mêmes contrées par Tahmas Kouli Khan in 1752 which was based on Fraser, Harvey, and others' works. Lockhart, L. Nadir Shah p.266.

3. Basham, A.L. Modern Historians on Ancient India, Historians of India pp.266-274.

4. History of the life of Nader Shah p.107.

to be the "deliverer of Persia" and the "conqueror of India".[1] "If we throw a veil over his latter years in which he was rather to be pitied than condemned, we shall see nothing in his life but what was noble and laudable, he had neither the rashness of Alexander, the indefatigable ambition of Caesar, the inflexible obstinacy of Charles the Twelfth, nor the wiles of his illustrious rival, Peter the Great, he resembled rather that real hero Gustavus Vasa, who to use the words of an excellent writer 'left the forest where he lay concealed and came to deliver his country'".[2] But like all military victories Nadir's conquests were in vain, and after his death Persia was left in a worse mess than before, "such are the fruits of military glory and such the state of those kingdoms whose rulers prefer the pride of conquest to the calmer joys of peace and to the welfare of their people".[3]

II

Jones's faith in the essential unity of mankind led him to attribute greatness to the cultures of Asia. The Orientals had also produced as great a literature as that

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1. History of the life of Nader Shah p.113.
2. Op.cit. p.115. The last sentence was from Voltaire's History of Charles. XII
3. Op.cit. p.120.

of Europe, "it is certain (to say no more) that the poets of Asia have as much genius as ourselves".[1] They have a Homer in Firdusi, a Virgil in Hafiz, and some of the Persian songs have a striking resemblance to the sonnets of Petrarch".[2] To Jones poetry was originally "a strong and animated expression of the human passions",[3] pure and unmixed. So the finest parts of the poetry, music, and painting "are expressions of the passions and operate on our minds by sympathy".[4] In this the Asian mind is most fertile. The climate and the environment in Asia enable the Asiatics to write poetry with passion and animation. Thus Yemen is the "only country in the world in which we can lay the scene of pastoral poetry", because no nation at this day can vie with the Arabians in the delightfulness of their climate, and the simplicity of their manners".[5] Persia too possesses a mild and temperate climate and the Persians have much leisure to write fine poetry. The Persians sleep on the rooftops and observe "the figures of the constellations and the various appearances of the heavens",[6] and this may in some measure account for

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1. On the poetry of the Eastern nations Poems p.174.
2. Poems p.V.
3. On the arts commonly called imitative Poems pp.202-203.
4. Op.cit. pp.216-217.
5. On the poetry of the Eastern nations Poems p.174.
6. Op.cit. p.188.

the use of allusions in their poetry to the heavenly bodies. Voltaire thought that these were examples of the bad taste of the Asiatics, but they only show "that every nation has a set of images and expressions peculiar to itself which arise from the differences of its climate, manners, and history".[1]

The manner of life also helps in producing sublime poetry. Thus Persia has produced more writers of every kind but chiefly poets, than all Europe put together,- "since their way of life cannot be cultivated to advantage without the greatest calmness and serenity of mind".[2] The Arabs have not only climatic advantages and natural beauty but they have been able to retain the simplicity of their ancestors for three thousand years and they were never subdued by any other nation. Arabia is the only country left in the world which is simple free and happy since Kashmir was conquered by the Mughals.[3] It is easy to detect a love for the simple life, a yearning for the primitive and a search for the noble savage in his

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1. On the poetry of the Eastern nations Poems p.188.
2. Op.cit. p.189.
3. Op.cit. p.174.

early writings on the Arabs.[1] No doubt he was charmed by the seven Arab poets with their nomadic life, violent love and thrilling adventures.[2]

This passion for the simplicity of tribal life is understandable in November 1780, when Jones had lost all his chances to win a seat in Parliament: "In these rambles into the wilds of Asia I soften the anguish which I feel whenever I reflect on the melancholy times in which we live".[3] It would be natural for a man with Jones's temperament to be attracted towards the uncommon and towards a mode of life entirely different from that of Europe. But he was no lover of the "irrational" nor did he think that the most "happy and free" Arabs were the most civilised people on earth. He had already read Rousseau's works and found them "wonderfully absurd".[4] His love and sympathy for the Arabs was shared by Gibbon,[5] a man who could hardly be called a romantic.

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1. Trimtton, A.S. The student of Arabic B.S.O.A.S. Vol.XI. pp.695-698.
2. Moallakat or seven Arabian poems Works Vol.10.p.8.
3. Letter to E. Cartwright 12.11.1780. as published in Memoirs of the life etc. of Edward Cartwright p.329.
4. Letter to George John 10.5.1772. Spencer papers.
5. Gibbon, E. The Decline and fall of the Roman Empire Vol.5. pp.319-325.

It is not easy to draw a clear line between the men of the Enlightenment and those of the Romantic movement especially in their attitudes towards non-European cultures. It was Candide, the hero of Voltaire's famous novel who went in search of happiness outside Europe, but his creator had no urge for the "primitive". On the other hand modern research has shown that Rousseau was no such primitivist as his English followers took him to be.[1]

At this stage Jones was only eager to make Asia appear more acceptable to Europe. So his emphasis was to find similarities rather than differences in cultures. In his Essay on the law of Bailments, a pioneer work on comparative law, he found that in spite of differences in other respects, "in the great system of contracts and the common intercourse between man and man, the Pootee of the Indians and the Digest of the Romans are by no means dissimilar".[2]

What he regretted most was the lack of general interest in Asia, which was considered to be strange and remote; "the very sound of which, they say, conveys the idea of something savage, but they would be at a loss to

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1. Lovejoy, A. The supposed primitivism of Rousseau's Discourse on inequality M.P. Vol.XXI. pp.165-186.

2. An Essay on the law of Bailments p.114.

assign a reason why the Aras and Forat are words less melodious than Dnieper and the Bogh:... the accounts of the northern kings are read with pleasure, are thought to abound with a variety of interesting events, while the historians of the East are neglected and the Asiatick languages considered as inharmonious and inelegant".[1] Asiatic poetry can at least revitalise European literature which has subsisted too long on the perpetual repetition of the same images and the incessant allusions to the same fables, and the study of Asian history gives insight into European history, showing, for instance, how the career of Nadir Shah affected the affairs of Europe. "If Persia had not been delivered by this daring genius, the Russians would still have possessed the rich provinces, which border on the Caspian lake, we would, no doubt, have attacked the Turks on the side of Georgia, which might have given them the dominion of the Black sea and might have opened a passage to Constantinople itself", or "If India had not been drained of its treasures in 1738, the Mughul Empire would not have been weakened and divided, the Nawabs or Viceroys would not have declared themselves independent of the Emperor, and consequently our settlements on the Ganges would still have depended

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1. Works Vol.12.p.343.

for protection on the court of Delhi".[1]

In this period Jones's knowledge of India was not very sound. His chief sources were European works on India. He drew heavily on Herbelot's Bibliothéque Orientale, Dow's History of Hindoostan and Robert Orme's work on wars in India. Among the Persian works on India he read Babur Nāma, Akbar Nāma and Haidar Ali's work on Kashmir. The Persian author wrote some eighty-four pages on the pre-Muslim history of Kashmir and took that part largely from Kalhāṇa's Rājataraṅigiṇī.[2]

In Jones's Description of Asia the part on India was taken mostly from Herbelot's article on Hend (India). He divided India into three parts as Herbelot did, and put Assam as a part of the Malayan peninsula. He thought that the word Porus signified a town and that Sanskrit had become like Greek "to be respected rather than known".[3] In his description of the Gangetic valley he followed Herbelot almost line for line, "all the territories were governed by Raï's or Rajas, who held their lands of a supreme lord called Belhar, the seat of whose residence

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1. Nader Shah pp.120-121.

2. A catalogue of the most valuable books in the Persian language Works Vol.5.pp.172-173. Cf. B.M.16,705 ff. 1-84.

3. Description of Asia Works Vol.12.p.391.

was the city of Cannouge, now in ruins".[1] From this he concluded that "the ancient system of government which prevailed (in India) was perfectly feudal".[2]

It seems that he took very little interest in India until he thought of going there as a judge in 1778. In May 1777 he was approached by R. Griffiths, the editor of Monthly Review to review his friend's book The Gentoo laws. Jones declined: "I am so totally engaged in forensick occupations and professional studies that I have not even time to read my friend's work much less to review it".[3] He had only a very vague idea of pre-Muslim India which was a "dark period" to him, for though India produced the fables of Bidpai and invented the game of chess, she had no poetry. The Mughals carried Persian poetry to India and "the Indian poets to this day compose their verses in imitation of them".[4] He had no sympathy for Indians: "The Indians are soft and voluptuous, but artful and insincere, at least to the Europeans, whom, to say the truth, they have no great reason of late years to

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1. Description of Asia Works Vol.12.p.389 ~~and see~~ cf. Herbelot Bibliothèque Orientale p.448.
2. Description of Asia Works Vol.12.p.389.
3. Letter to R. Griffiths May 1777 Bodl.(Oxf.)28460.
4. On the poetry of the Eastern nations Poems p.198.

admire for the opposite virtues".[1]

When in 1778 he was offered a post of judgeship in India by Lord Bathurst, the Chancellor, who had already made him a Commissioner of the Bankrupts in 1776, Jones turned his attention to India. He listened carefully to the debates on India and studied the laws of the country. Soon he came to be recognised as an authority on India. Burke invited him to breakfast to discuss the Bengal Bill: "The natives of the East, to whose literature you have done so much justice, are particularly under your protection for their rights".[2] There were others, besides Burke, who thought the same about Jones: "I have for a week or ten days passed, been an assiduous attendant in your gallery on the different India Bills, principally that concerning the Bengal judicature, on which I have been consulted by the promoters and the opposers of it. I have steered a middle course, as I really think parts of the bill wise and salutary, though I have strong objections to other parts, many amendments have been made and one whole clause struck out on my remonstrance".[3]

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1. On the poetry of the Eastern nations Poems p.198.

2. Letter from Edmund Burke (17.3.1782) as published in Shore, J. Memoirs pp.201-202. For the date of the letter see Checklist of Burke correspondence p.264.

3. Letter to George John 29.6.1781. Spencer papers.

Like many Englishmen of the age Jones had little sympathy for the East India Company. He shared the general suspicion that British rule in India might corrupt "freedom loving" Britons and endanger freedom in Britain. In Pembrokeshire in the summer of 1780, he saved a man who was prosecuted for raising a false alarm. One of the two magistrates who prosecuted the man "was an Indian" (meaning an Englishman from India). In his speech Jones mingled "many bitter reflections on the state of his country at the time of the alarm, and on the attempt... to import the Indian laws into England by imprisoning and indicting an honest man".[1] Such sentiments could be traced in his marginal notes on Orme's copy of The Extract of a letter from the governor and council at Fort William to the Court of Directors.[2] In this letter, Hastings suggested that the children of the criminals should be enslaved to eradicate crime in India as in that country the "slaves are treated as the children of the families to which they belong, and often acquire a happier state by their slavery than they could have hoped by the enjoyment of liberty". Jones commented "this is the most spurious

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1. Letter to George John 4.9.1780. Spencer papers.

2. Orme collections 41.13. This was printed in 1772.

argument for despotism which all despots use".

He looked forward to going to India, to be able to mitigate the misery of the Indians, to purchase Oriental books and manuscripts, and to earn enough to be able to return to England to live independently.[1]

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1. Letter to Edmund Burke 17.3.1782. Burke papers, Wentworth muniments.

Chapter IV

Mr. Jones,- "a staunch Whig, but very wrongheaded".

John Shore, in his efforts to depict Jones as an evangelical hero, an embodiment of public and private virtues, either deliberately suppressed Jones's political views or made them acceptable to the establishment of his time.[1] Professor Arberry and others, during the bicentenary celebration of his birth, have done a great deal to undo this whitewashing by Shore. But so far no attempt has been made to assess the political ideas of Jones against the background of the eighteenth century reform movement. Arberry, after considering a few quotations from some unpublished correspondence, came to the conclusion that Jones was not guilty of being a republican "in the literal sense of the term".[2] In our opinion such judgements are superfluous when we find that, in the eighteenth century, republicanism did not exclude monarchy. In fact the classical republicanism of the extreme Whigs was easily reconciled with the Hanoverian dynasty.[3] To most, the term republic meant the body politic as such, and not a

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1. ~~Supra p.~~ Arberry, A.J. New light on Sir William Jones, B.S.O.A.S. Vol. XI pp. 677-685.
2. ~~B.S.O.A.S. Vol.XI.p.679.~~ Op. cit. p.679.
3. Robbins C. Eighteenth Century Commonwealthman p.5.

form of government. We here try to evaluate Jones's political ideas in the contemporary context. We try to find out where Jones really stood in the eighteenth-century politics, whether he was a "staunch Whig, but very wrongheaded", as Horace Walpole[1] described him, or an "eighteenth century leveller" as Dean Tucker[2] thought him. Did his political writings lack philosophical capacity and deal mostly with particulars rather than things general, as the writer in the Edinburgh Review wanted us to believe?[3] What were the sources of Jones's political ideas? What were his contributions to the early reform movement?

The process of alienation, which started with punishment at school, led Jones to political radicalism. He turned against authority and power. "Distrust in power is the very nerve of wisdom",[4] he once wrote to his friend.

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1. Horace Walpole to William Mason May 1780. Correspondence Vol.29.pp.35-36.

2. Tucker,J. A sequel to Sir William Jones's pamphlet p.15.

3. E.R. Vol.V.1804-5.p.340. In reviewing Shore's Memoirs, the writer further commented on Jones, "his ideas upon the theory and principles of government appear to be very crude and superficial and his zeal in the cause of liberty seems rather to have arisen from the warmth of his own benevolent heart and from an habitual admiration of the classic republics of Greece and Italy, than from any profound study or just apprehension of the constitution of modern society".

4. Letter to George John 21.10.1782. Spencer papers.

His distrust of power and his passion for independence were encouraged by his mother as Jones himself admitted.[1] Jones found further inspiration in the writings of such seventeenth century thinkers as Locke, Milton and Newton, and Cicero and Demosthenes of the Classical period. In his Oxford oration which he was unable to deliver he described Seldon, Milton and Locke as the three "greatest men who ever adorned this island".[2] Milton towers above them all: "had he flourished in Athens, while Athens herself was independent, he would have rivalled Sophocles in poetry, Demosthenes in eloquence and even Socrates in virtue".[3] Locke was equally great in political thoughts; his Treatise on Government would "remain a perpetual testimony of his wisdom, learning virtue and a full confutation of the audacious charge against men of letters, that instead of being friends of liberty, they are flatterers of power and high priests of oppression".[4] The distrust of

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1. Supra p. 24-25.

2. Oration p.73.

3. Op.cit. p.73. Jones told George John on 6.12.1779 that he was very cold to Captain Layton (a common friend with whom he dined the previous evening) for he abused liberty and Milton: "whom of all men I most admired". Spencer papers.

4. ~~Op.cit.~~ Oration p.74.

power and the love of liberty naturally attracted Jones to Cicero. He read and imitated most classical scholars but the figure of Cicero looms large in his works and correspondence. We have already noticed how he imitated Cicero in his correspondence[1] and modelled his historical works on Cicero's writings.[2] He also found in Cicero a fighter for liberty against tyranny and oppression. Cicero's fight against authority in defence of the Roman Republic, his detestation of corruption found its way into Jones's works. Jones never forgave Augustus, as he was responsible for Cicero's death: "I have not Christian charity for him".[3] So Cicero was the source of inspiration in a fight against an Augustus, like the King of England who had misused his prerogatives and was threatening the very existence of "our Republic",-the English constitution. Against such tyranny the vigilant citizens should gather to defend liberty: "Let you and me therefore be Philosophers now and then but citizens always; let us sometimes observe with eagerness the satellites of Jupiter but let us

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1. Supra p. 37.
2. Supra p. 54
3. Letter to Gibbon 30.6.1781. as published in The Works of Sir William Jones Vol.I.p.365.

incessantly watch with jealousy the satellites of the King".[1] This vigilance is to "prevent the introduction among us of a government similar to that of France or Russia, for which England is almost ripe. Let no man talk to me of a mild monarchy. I will not be governed by a single man whatever".[2] He shared the Whig view that the aim of George III was to usurp power and wreck the Constitution. To him, as to most Whigs and the King, the English Constitution was the summum bonum of human wisdom and aspiration for political liberty since the days of Athens and Rome: "The original part of our Constitution is almost divine; to such a degree that no state of Rome or Greece could even boast of one superior to it nor could Plato, Aristotle nor any legislator even conceive of a more perfect model of a state. The three parts which composed it are so harmoniously blended and incorporated that neither the flute of Aristoxenus nor

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1. Letter to George John 13.11.1777. Spencer papers. Shore published it in the Memoirs (pp.42-43) but suppressed the latter part of it and dated it wrongly as 13.11.1776.

2. Op.cit.

the lyre of Timotheus ever produced more perfect concord".[1] This concord is to be maintained. The monarchy, Aristocracy or Commons should not upset this balance by crossing the limit drawn by the law. This conception, very Ciceronian, stems from the fear of concentration of power in one man. Montesquieu gave this a classical form in The Spirit of the Laws, as separation of powers. Burke and the Whigs of the opposition agreed with such principles.

But Jones parted company with the Whigs when it came to assessing the role of the aristocracy. He had a certain dislike for the nobility. Perhaps he partly inherited his mother's dislike of patronage and partly he found the nobility lacking in virtue, which he thought the most essential quality in a politician in a corrupt age. He disagreed with Burke's views[2] that the aristocracy had a

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1. Letter to Count Reviczky (April 1768) as published in Shore, J. Memoirs p.58. This comment was made in reply to Reviczky's own observation on English politics. "I confess to you that I never saw anything similar to the mode here pursued of electing members of Parliament". Letter to William Jones, op.cit.p.55. Shore must have got his dates mixed up here for Reviczky was obviously referring to the incident on March 28, 1768 in London in which he was dragged out of his coach and had his boot soles chalked with the slogan "no 45". This was in connection with Wilkes's election, so W.J. wrote this letter in April 1768 and not on April 1766, as Shore believed. Cf. Rudé, G.F.E. Wilkes and Liberty p.43.

2. Burke, E. Thoughts on the Cause of Present Discontent, Works Vol.II. pp. 7-8

special role to play in the British Constitution. There was no conception of Trusteeship in Jones. This was one of the reasons why he disliked Burke. "I have been much with Burke on this business and have heard many animated speeches from him in the House, we are good friends, but in serious truth, he is too aristocratical (as most of his countrymen are) for me. His system about America is to me incomprehensible and his system of national liberty still more sublime, that is, obscure".[1] With the years he grew to fear the Aristocracy more than he feared the King. "Care must now be taken lest by reducing the regal power to its just level we raise the aristocratical to a dangerous height", he wrote to Thomas Yeates,[2] the Secretary of the Society for Constitutional Information. Similar sentiments are echoed in his correspondence to others.[3]

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1. Letter to George John 29.6.1781. Spencer papers. The business referred to was a debate on "Bengal Judicature Bill".

2. Letter to Thomas Yeates 25.4.1782. as published in Shore, J. Memoirs p.209.

3. "Of English politicks, I say nothing because I doubt whether you and I should ever agree on them. I do not mean the narrow politicks of contending parties, but the great principles of government and legislation, the majesty of the whole nation collectively; and consistency of popular rights with legal prerogatives, which ought to be supported in order to repress the oligarchical power". Letter to John Wilmot 3.10.1787. B.M.9828.f.158.

This was also clear from his dislike of rank. "This I know that I should think very ill of any society in which rank was considered as a substitute for virtues, for if that were the case such men as the late Lord Baltimore who was sovereign prince of Maryland, such men as the late Duc de Villars and hundreds more whose profligacy has made their names stink in our nostrils would be very respectable characters".[1] His fear of aristocracy found expression in his conception of English history. In setting forth a plea for constitutional reformation, Jones invoked history. He considered the history of England since the Norman Conquest as the history of a struggle between two forces, feudalism and commerce. The forces of commerce and trade were trying to replace the feudalism, "there has been a continued war in the constitution of England between two jarring principles: the evil principle of the feudal system with his dark auxiliaries, ignorance and false philosophy; and the good principle of increasing commerce, with her liberal allies, true learning and sound reason".[2] This idea of

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1. Letter to George John 20.9.1775. Spencer papers.

2. Speech on Reformation, Works (1807) Vol.8.pp.506-7. Capell Loft found this passage significant enough to publish it in the proceedings of the Society for Constitutional Information. See Proceed.London S.C.I. 12.8.82.

the fight of two principles had already found expression among the early radicals: "Did we not know that, at this day it consists of a mixture of the old or first establishment and the new or that which took place at (and since), what is commonly called the conquest by William the First". These two forms of Government, the first founded upon the principles of liberty and the latter upon the principles of slavery being so diametrically opposite, "it is no wonder that they are continually at war one with the other".[1]

The conception of English history as the history of the continued struggle of the English people to free Anglo-Saxon institutions from the Norman yoke was a popular one, and was used as a weapon for parliamentary reform by the early radicals.[2] There was nothing new in Jones's detecting two struggling forces in history. But what was new, was a vague notion of interrelationship between the system of property and the system of government: "What caused the absurd yet fatal distinction between property, personal and real? The feudal principle .... what prevented the large provision in the Act of Henry IV by which all freeholders were declared electors,

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1. Proceed. London S.C.I. 24.5.1782.

2. Hill, C. Norman Yoke in Saville, John Democracy and the Labour Movement p.12.

from being extended to all holders of property, however denominated, however inconsiderable? The same infernal principle which subdued and stifled the genuine equalising spirit of our constitution".[1] To Jones feudalism was a force of reaction whereas commerce was the source of prosperity and happiness. He was against the feudal system but not against the nobility within the limits of the constitution. He would tolerate the nobility so long as they did not interfere with the rights of the people to choose their representatives in Parliament, and the extension of commerce and learning. But he would not tolerate the feudal system, which prevented the prosperity of the nation and deprived the people of their liberty: "If we find that this demon, (the feudal system) was himself in process of time subdued, as he certainly was by the extension of commerce under Elizabeth, and the enlarged conceptions which extended commerce always produces, by the revival of learning which dispelled the darkness of Gothick ignorance and by the great transactions

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1. Works Vol.8.pp.508-9. Though Jones was convinced of the interconnection between the system of property and the system of politics he made no explicit statement to that effect, nor did he work out a thorough system of social enquiry on this line, like John Millar. Cf. Lehmann, Wm. C. John Millar B.J.S. Vol.3.pp.30-46.

of the last century, when the true theory and genuine principles of freedom were unfolded and illustrated, we shall not hesitate to pronounce that by the spirit of our constitution all Englishmen having property of any kind of quantity are entitled to votes in choosing Parliamentary delegates".[1] This spirit of the constitution is to be evoked to kill the feudal system which was only "scotched" by the Revolution.[2]

In invoking the spirit of the constitution Jones showed that he was not forward looking. John Cartwright[3] disclaimed that his system was an innovation: "Making our Parliaments annual and our representation equal can neither of them in any sense, nor without a direct falsehood, be styled innovations. Both of these were in antient practice of the constitution". Similarly, Jones attacked Henry Fielding for comparing the English constitution with the weather, as they are both changeable.[4] Jones believed that

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1. Works Vol.8.p.509.

2. Op.cit. p.511.

3. Cartwright, J. Take your Choice as quoted in Veitch, G.S. Genesis of the Reform Movement p.48.

4. Fielding, H. An enquiry into the causes of the late increase of robbers p.V. Cf. Letter to T.Y. 7.6.1782 as published in Shore, J. Memoirs p.210.

the spirit of the constitution is unchangeable and like Cartwright and other reformers he sought only to change the form of the constitution to restore the true balance which was in the spirit of the constitution. This balance is to be restored by curtailing the King's prerogatives, annual Parliaments, and the extension of suffrage,- "The Spirit of our constitution required representation of the people nearly equal and nearly universal".[1]

This was how he came to support the movement for universal suffrage. He was not a member of any of the reform organisations until 1782, when he was elected as an honorary member of the Society for Constitutional Information.[2] But he had always been sympathetic to its cause,[3] ever since it was born in 1780 and he was in close touch with the Cartwrights, especially Edmund, the inventor of the power loom, who was a co-student of Jones at the University College. The Society also published his poem,

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1. Works (1807) Vol.8.p.508.

2. London S.C.I. List of Members 1782, p.v.

3. He wrote to Thomas Yeates, Secretary of S.C.I., "I should indeed long ago have testified my regard for so useful an institution by an offer of my humble service in promoting it, if I had not really despaired in my present situation of being able to attend your meeting as often as I should ardently wish". Letter to T.Y. 25.4.1782. as published in Shore, J. Memoirs p.208.

An Ode in Imitation of Alcaeus and later the tract on The Principles of Government. In this poetry, Jones showed his love for liberty and depicted his conception of State and law:

> Men who their duties know
> But know their rights, and, knowing, dare maintain,
> Prevent the long armed blow,
> And crush the tyrant while they reel the chain.
> These constitute a state,
> And sovereign law, that state's collected will
> O'er thrones and globes elate
> Sits Empress, crowning good; repressing ill;[1]

The State consists of the whole people and the law is the aggregate will of the people and not the wish of a sovereign: "I differ from Blackstone, he defines law "a rule prescribed by a superior power". I define it the will of the whole community as far as it can be collected with convenience".[2] The aggregate will of the people is the supreme authority; King, Lords and the Commons are all ruled by it: "I am delighted with the reflection that you should so early be warmed with the flame of genuine patriotism and declare your opposition to all power not deduced from its true fountains, the will of the aggregate community which alone is and ought to be called law".[3]

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1. Works (~~1807~~) Vol.10.p.390.
2. Letter to George John 21.11.1779. Spencer papers.
3. Letter to George John 18.2.1780. Spencer papers, as published in Shore, J. Memoirs p.212.

In England the will of the people is expressed in the Common Law which is the true authority. The written law is subjugated to it,- "The unwritten or common law contains the true spirit of our constitution: the written law often most unjustifiably altered the form of it: the Common Law is the collected wisdom of many centuries, having been used and approved by successive generations, but the statutes frequently contain the whims of a few leading men".[1] So the statutes could be changed. He knew that the statutory laws do not permit copyholders a right to vote in the County elections. So they do not have a legal right but a natural right to vote derived from the Common Law and the spirit of the constitution: "Had I been in Parliament in the 31st of George II, I should have thought as a legislator, that copyholders had a natural right supported by the spirit of our constitution; I should have despised the gabble of the feudal lawyers; and should consequently both have argued and voted against the act".[2]

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1. Letter to Thomas Yeates 7.6.1782. as published in Shore, J. Memoirs P. 212.
2. Letter to John Cartwright 23.5.82. as published in The Life Vol.I.pp.151-52. The 31st of George II disqualified all tenants by copy of court roll as electors.

The happiness of the people is an aim of the law but he thought that the aggregate will of the people would necessarily mean the happiness of the whole community. It is the statutory laws which could make men unhappy and in that case should be changed.[1]

If law is the aggregate will of the people then the state consists of the whole community living within it. The state is a free society, where the people are assembled together, voluntarily, without any compulsion. These and similar views were explained in a pamphlet called The Principles of Government.

In summer 1782 William Jones went to France, with his friend John Paradise. They wanted to proceed to America where Jones would help Paradise in some property dispute and have an opportunity to see for himself the new state where he had been invited to settle. But John Paradise was a weak man; he was afraid to make the arduous journey across the Atlantic, and backed out at the last moment. Jones had no alternative but to postpone his much desired visit to the States. However this last visit to France was

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1. He wrote to his pupil and friend "My dear Lord when your country will call upon you (and it is a call which you will eagerly obey) ... to support our declining constitution, to defend our violated rights, to assist in repealing evil laws, in establishing good one promoting the happiness of our fellow citizens". (sic). Letter to George John 10.4 (1777). Spencer papers.

an important landmark in his life. His failure to go to America led him to proceed to Paris, where he met his old friend Franklin who was then busy conferring with the French minister Vergennes. Here the three entered into a political argument, in which Jones maintained that, "the first principles of government could be made intelligible to plain illiterate readers"(sic).[1] This Vergennes thought impossible, and Franklin was doubtful about it. Jones was prompted to write a pamphlet on the principles of government in the form of Socratic dialogue, between a fictitious scholar and a fictitious peasant. The scholar asks the peasant to sign a petition for Parliamentary reform. His arguments are based within the framework of the peasant's terms of reference; so the village club is compared with the state. After reading the pamphlet, Franklin and Vergennes agreed with Jones that the first principles of government can be made simple enough to be understood by common folk. But this pamphlet The principles of government which Jones later described as a mere "jeu d'esprit", did more than prove his point in an argument.[2] The Society for Constitutional Information found that many of their ideas,

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1. The catalogue of the Library of Samuel Parr p.441.
2. Letter to George John 5.10.1782. Spencer papers.

for example the active participation of the citizens in state affairs and the people's choice in the formation of the legislative branch of government, were echoed in this pamphlet, and what is more they were put very clearly and distinctly. Therefore the Society published ten thousand copies of the pamphlet and distributed them gratis.[1] Some idea of the popularity of the Dialogue may be measured from the number of editions published. There were in fact nine editions, one of which was published by John Cartwright, another radical reformer.[2] The principles of government was one of the most influential books of the movement for Parliamentary reform in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and so gave Jones an undeniable position in the history of the reform movement. However, though the pamphlet contained sufficient explosives to invite the wrath of the conservatives of the day, and so made it all the more popular among the reformers, it would not have been quite so popular had it not been given involuntary publicity by Fitzmaurice, a die-hard conservative, who as the Sheriff of Flintshire took upon himself the task of defending the good cause of loyalty towards the King and God.

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1. Tucker, J. A sequel to Sir William Jones's pamphlet p.111.
2. Cartwright, F.D. The Life and correspondence of Major Cartwright. Vol.II.p.175.

Rev. William Shipley, the Dean of St. Asaph#, a friend of Jones and later his brother-in-law, received a copy of the pamphlet from the author. The Dean was a member of the Flintshire Committee which was connected with the County Associations for Parliamentary Reform, so naturally he showed the tract to the Committee, who thought it worth publishing in Welsh for the people of Flintshire, and Mr. Edward Jones, another member, was asked to translate it. He decided not to do so after he had consulted a few fellow members who considered that the tract might cause "mischief from ignorance and misconception if translated and circulated in Wales".[1] It was then agreed not to proceed any further with the publication of the pamphlet in Welsh. But Fitzmaurice did not miss the first opportunity to attack the Dean and his Flintshire Committee at a county meeting, for intending to publish a seditious tract which called upon the people to take up arms against the King. This provoked Shipley to bring out an edition of the Dialogue in order to prove that the tract was not seditious, "the friends of the Revolution will instantly see that it contains no principle which has not the support of the highest authority, as well as the clearest reason".[2]

1. Gurney, I. The whole proceedings of the trial of the indictment p.31.

2. Preface, The principles of government in a dialogue between a scholar and a peasant (1785).

The Dialogue was published on the 24th January 1783 and on 29th January an advertisement appeared in the Chester Chronicle defending the contents of the tract. On the same day William Jones, the Under-Sheriff of Ruthin, not to be confused with the author of the tract in question, attacked Shipley for advocating the signing of petitions for Parliamentary Reform.[1]

Fitzmaurice and Jones of Ruthin did not want to miss any opportunity to belittle the reformers in the eyes of the people of Flintshire in particular and of the nation in general. Fitzmaurice decided to prosecute the Dean for publishing a seditious pamphlet; he wrote to the Treasury to help him in the matter and had an audience with the King for the same purpose. However neither the King nor the Treasury was ready to prosecute the publisher of a pamphlet when its author had recently been appointed a Judge in Bengal; while the Treasury politely declined to help, the King laughed at the idea. Being discouraged by the highest authorities Fitzmaurice left the onus of the prosecution on William Jones, the Under-Sheriff of Ruthin.[2]

The trial that followed was an important episode in

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1. N.L.W. 2598C.

2. Gurney,I. Proceedings p.21.

the legal history of Britain, for it brought home to the English public the limitations of the jury in cases of criminal libel.[1] In the eighteenth century in such cases all that the jury had to do was to establish the fact of publication; it was left to the court to decide whether a thing published was libellous or not. In this case Thomas Erskine, counsel for the defendant clearly showed that the functions of the jury were limited and incompatible with the changing ideas of freedom of speech.

The trial, after several delays, finally came on at Shrewsbury Assizes on the 6th August 1784, where Justice Buller presided. Throughout, the prosecution maintained that the jury was only asked to find Shipley guilty of the indictment, that is guilty of publishing the tract with seditious intent. Erskine, on the other hand wanted the jury to decide whether the book in question was libellous or not and whether the Dean published it with seditious intention, not just to find out whether he was guilty of the indictment. This created some confusion among the jury who returned a verdict of guilty of "publishing only but whether libel or not the jury does not find".[2] Erskine successfully got the verdict literally

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1. Holdsworth, Sir William A history of English Law Vol.8.p.374.

2. Gurney, I. Proceedings p.57.

recorded, in spite of the opposition of Justice Buller.[1] Later, on the 8th November, Erskine moved in the Court of King's bench, where the Earl of Mansfield presided, the verdict be set aside, and obtained a ruling to show cause why there should not be a new trial. However on the 16th November Manfield upheld Justice Buller's judgement. Erskine in reply moved a motion in arrest of judgement. This he did on two grounds; first the verdict given by the jury was not sufficient to warrant the judgement of the court, and secondly, the indictment did not contain any legal charge of libel. The court unanimously decided that the indictment was defedtive and that the judgement should be arrested, and so the Dean was set free.[2] The prosecution did not proceed further with the case. The success of Erskine and Shipley was celebrated throughout the country with bonfires and illuminations, especially at Twyford, near Winchester, where Jonathan Shipley the Bishop of St. Asaph and father of the Dean, was living at the time.[3]

This case thus focussed public attention on the problem of trial by jury in cases of libel. This problem

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1. Gurney, I. Proceedings.
2. Howell, T.B. State trials Vol.XXI.p.1043.
3. Op.cit. p.1086.

had already been noticed and much discussed in connection with similar cases, like that of Rex.vs.Almon in 1769 where Lord Mansfield maintained that it was up to the court to decide the nature of a publication.[1] But in our case Erskine successfully got a verdict of publishing only, and later arrested the judgement. The radical reformers and some Whigs of the opposition took this as their victory, and Justice Buller's decision was considered, as M. Dawes put it, "an infringement on English liberty and legal system of trial by jury".[2] The issue was kept alive by similar trials and finally Charles James Fox introduced a Bill in 1792 which gave the jury the right to decide on the libellous tendency of a thing published. This Bill was passed by the House, despite opposition from Thurlow, the Chancellor, an old enemy of Jones.[3] This was surely a step forward towards more freedom of speech.

The farreaching effects of this case in legal history have somewhat overshadowed the importance of the Dialogue

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1. Robertson, C.G. Select Statutes p.272.
2. Dawes, M. Principles of Government by Sir William Jones p.53.
3. Robertson, C.G. Op.cit. p.272.

and its author in the history of the movement for Parliamentary reform. But to his contemporaries the contents of the pamphlet and the political views of the author were important and familiar. The Society for Constitutional Information took keen interest in the trial, as they appointed Erskine to defend Shipley. To the Society the defence of Shipley was the defence of their cause. They circulated an advertisement defending the contents of the tract at Wrexham where the trial was originally going to take place. The radicals upheld Jones's ideas as an expression of political wisdom; one edition of his works was brought out after the notorious Manchester Massacre to prove the prudence of Jones's political philosophy, which if accepted, would avoid such occurences.[1] The fame that Jones gained as an Orientalist was useful to the radicals. They made him an honorary member of the Society; John Cartwright in 1820 cited his friendship with Jones to prove the respectability of his early activities.[2] Sir William Jones was equally recognised as a figure to be reckoned with by those who disagreed with him. Josiah Tucker,

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1. There were two editions of his political tracts published in 1819 by John Fairburn and E. Wilson.

2. John Cartwright to the Duke of Roxburgh 4.3.1820 as published in Life Vol.II.pp.175-176.

Dean of Gloucester, who had already made his conservative viewpoints known, as he had dared to challenge Locke, the patron saint of the eighteenth century Whiggish radicalism,[1] was prompted to write a sequel to Jones's Dialogue to prove the dangerous nature of its views.

It was rather the boldness and simplicity of Jones's style than any originality of thought which made his works so popular. Even by eighteenth-century standards Jones's frankness and independence of character were remarkable. When he wrote his famous Dialogue he put the ideas that were already prevalent among most eighteenth-century reformers simply and boldly without much thought for the consequences. Consider the following quotation;-

"Scholar;... recollect your opinion about your club in the village and tell me what ought to be the consequence, if the King alone was to insist on making laws or altering them at his will and pleasure. Peasant: He too must be expelled. Scholar: Oh! but think of his standing army, and of the militia, which now are his in substance though ours in form. Peasant: If he were to employ that force against the nation they would and ought to resist him or the state would cease to be a state... We ought always

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1. In 1781 Josiah Tucker, Dean of Gloucester, wrote a Treatise concerning civil government to disprove Locke.

therefore to be ready; and keep each of us a strong firelock in the corner of his bedroom".[1]

Surely this in itself would sound most revolutionary in the eighteenth-century context, and the prosecution made much of it during the trial. In the innuendoes of the Indictment it was suggested that the King in the pamphlet meant the King of England, hence the tract called upon the people to arm and rise against the King. In fact Jones was only trying to establish his conception of the state and law. To Jones the law is the aggregate will of the people and the state is a free society where people are assembled, "to be as merry as they can without hurting themselves or their neighbours but chiefly to relieve their wants".[2] In this respect it is comparable to a village club where the residents of the village assemble freely and are governed by a set of equal rules agreed upon by the members and should the officers selected by the members want to perpetuate their position, they ought to be expelled. So in an ideal state the king is chosen by the people. He cannot compel them to associate but he rules with their consent. He has more power but subject

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1. The Principles of Government (1782) p.6.

2. Op.cit. p.5.

to the law which is the "collected will" of the people. If he violates the law the people have a right to expel him, and if he employs force to perpetuate his position the people shall use force in reply. Hence they should be prepared and learn to use firelocks. Jones never thought that this could be interpreted as seditious and create such a stir. He wrote to a friend: "Had I dreamt that the dialogue would have made such a stir I would certainly have taken more pains with it".[1]

The counsel for the prosecution in the case against Shipley thought otherwise, he attacked the Dialogue for it had asked the farmer not to uphold the "sound doctrine" of fearing God and honouring the King, but on the contrary to defy authority.[2] Erskine on the other hand maintained that "if any one sentence from the beginning to the end of it is seditious or libellous, the Bill of Rights (to use the language of the advertisement prefixed to it) was seditious libel; the Revolution was a wicked rebellion, the existing government is a traitorous conspiracy against the hereditary monarchy of England; our sovereign whose title I am persuaded we are all of us

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1. Letter to "a friend in the Bar". 13.4.1784. as published in Shore, J. Memoirs p.246.

2. Gurney, I. Proceedings p.13.

prepared to defend with our own blood, is an usurper of the crown of these kingdoms".[1] What the counsels were debating here was clearly an important part of eighteenth-century political polemics. The question was whether the 1688 Revolution established the right of the people to choose their own government and resist and expel if need be an oppressive monarch. To Jones and to the early radicals it did, but to the conservatives like Dean Tucker it only established a new dynasty. According to the Dean "the government is indisputably the ordinance of God, for the benefit of mankind; in that sense it is jure divino, and therefore ought never to be attempted to be annihilated or even to be rendered too excessively weak and impotent as not to be able to answer those good ends which providence had graciously proposed".[2]

Richard Price raised the question of the king's status again during the French Revolution; in his last sermon he maintained that the English King "is the only lawful king in the world because the only one who owes crown to the choice of the people".[3] This provoked Burke to write his Reflections attacking the doctrine

1. Gurney, I. Proceedings p.19.
2. Tucker, J. A Sequel to Sir William Jones's pamphlet p.11.
3. As quoted in Aldrige, A.G. Man of Reason p.136.

of popular choice and Thomas Paine gave his reply to Burke in his famous tract the Rights of Man.

However it would be a mistake to portray Jones as a revolutionary, an eighteenth-century leveller, who wanted to do away with the monarchy and nobility. No doubt he supported the men when they armed themselves to throw away an old system as in America and France,[1] but he would hardly support a system where the propertied middle class would not enjoy a privileged position. In fact his political works had a twofold function, they attacked too much concentration of power in few hands, they also encouraged the propertied class to arm themselves in defending their property against any encroachments. It is nowhere better illustrated than in his attitude to the Gordon riots.

The Gordon riots like most other urban riots in the eighteenth century were an expression of, as Rudé has put it, "a groping desire (of the poor) to settle accounts with the rich, if only for a day, and to achieve some kind of social justice",[2] though they started with quite different aims. During this period Jones was pre-occupied with his campaigns in the Oxford election where he was a

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1. Letter to John Wilmot 12.10.1790. B.M.9828 f.161.

2. Rudé, G.F.E. Gordon Riots Trans. Royal Hist. Society Vol.VI.p.111.

candidate. While the city was subjected to nightmarish experiences of fire and looting Jones was at Lamb's building in the Temple, making various lists of patrons who had substantial influence among the Oxford voters. Suddenly he became aware of the riots. On 7 June rumour had it that a gang was planning to attack the Temple. Jones was alarmed, he sent his valuables to a safe place and together with others prepared to defend the Temple. Such efforts proved unnecessary as soldiers moved in. But this clearly showed that he was determined to resist "the rabble" with force.[1]

Some of his thoughts during this period were expressed in letters to Lady Georgiana. He condemned the politicians who had misused the name of liberty and incited the populace, "by pretending that the will of the rabble is the law; that liberty is the power given to the populace of acting according to their will".[2] To him, "law is the will of the people, and liberty is freedom from all political restraint except such as is imposed by laws enacted by the people".[3] So Jones was not hesitant to take up arms against the "rabble" in defence of property.

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1. Letter to Lady Georgiana 8.6.1780. Spencer papers.
2. Letter to Lady Georgiana 9.6.1780.
3. Op.cit.

But on the other hand he also feared that the government had used the riots as a pretext to strengthen their power, "what I as a lover of my country chiefly dread is the pretext for strengthening the prerogative (already too strong for the freedom of Parliament-)".[1] So he put his faith in a citizens militia; to set an example he gathered a ~~voluntary~~ party of volunteers from among the students and barristers to defend the Temple. Dean Shipley, who was converted to Jones's ideas did a similar glorious deed in 1796, when he helped to put down unrest in Wales and received thanks for that from the Duke of Portland.[2] In March 1768 Jones expressed his dislike of riots. He then condemned Wilkes for the folly of inciting the people instead of holding them in; "I cannot therefore restrain my indignation against Wilkes, bold and able, but turbulent man, the very torch and firebrand of sedition".[3] The Gordon riots confirmed his views and frightened him enough to write a plan to suppress such occurrences in future. This was his tract, An inquiry into the legal mode of suppressing riots. In this he criticised the Riot Acts and felt that the use of military power to

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1. Letter to Lady Georgiana 10.6.1780. Spencer papers.
2. Duke of Portland to William Shipley 12.2.1796. N.L.W. 2409C.
3. Letter to C. Reviczky April 1768. as published in Shore, J. Memoirs p.59.

suppress riots was unnecessary as the English constitution permits civil power in the form of citizens militia, "to repel such rabble". To prove this point he ransacked English law books and showed that the law allows the citizens to take up arms against internal revolts.

He sought Wilkes's help to implement his plans;[1] the old firebrand of sedition had now changed sides and fired at the rioters who were people of a class similar to those who earlier gathered under the slogan of "Wilkes and liberty".[2] Jones also preached his doctrine in the circuits and asked his friend Samuel Parr, a minister, to train his parishioners to use firelocks, "to defend God and liberty".[3]

The dual nature of his ideas is further illustrated in his critique of Shelburne's Plan for national defence.[4] In his plan Shelburne proposed that battalions should be established in each town for the national defence against internal and external enemies. Shelburne wanted the officers of such battalions to be appointed by the King,

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1. Letter to John Wilkes 7.8.1780. B.M. 30877 f.90-91.
2. Rudé, G.F.E. Wilkes and liberty p.192.
3. Letter to Samuel Parr 21.7.1780. as published in The Works of Samuel Parr Vol.I.pp.116-117.
4. Works Vol.8.pp.521-524.

their ranks to be determined according to the size of the property owned by them. They should be controlled by the army and financed by the government. Jones on the contrary proposed that such battalions be formed voluntarily from among the inhabitants, gentry, yeomanry, and substantial householders. The ranks of the officers were to be determined according to the proportion of their contribution to a common fund which should finance the upkeep of the battalions. Jones's aim was to curtail the influence of the executive and the army, and to put the control of the defence in the hands of men with money, and not necessarily with landed property. He would not give the power to run the militia to people without enough money to contribute to the proposed common fund. So the peasants in the tract are to arm themselves to defend themselves not only against the king and aristocracy but also against those who would defy the law and the sanctity of private property. Jones defined law as the aggregate will of the people, but he never defined the term "people". To him the word "people" sometimes included the lower order, sometimes it did not. This ambiguity is also reflected in his concept of the electorate: "I said, nearly universal; for I admit that our constitution both in form and spirit requires some property electors either real or personal, in possession or in action; but I consider a fair trade or

profession as valuable property; and an Englishman who can support himself by honest industry, though in a low station, has often a more independent mind than the prodigal owners of a large encumbered estate. When Payne speaks of every inhabitant and commoner, to whom he supposes that the right of voting originally belonged, I cannot persuade myself that he meaned to include such as having nothing at all and being unable or unwilling to gain anything by art or labour were supported by alms".[1] In fact, Jones always emphasised the importance of some qualification in the electorate.

In the Dialogue the scholar asks the peasant who are the choosers in the village club election. The peasant replies, "All who were not upon the parish in our club; if a man asks relief of the overseer, he ceases to be one of us, because he must depend on the overseer".[2] By Jones's analogy this is true for the state as well; men without sufficient property or trade lack enough responsibility to be given the right to vote.

So Jones was no eighteenth-century leveller as Dean Tucker thought of him. We are rather inclined to agree with Horace Walpole who described him as "a staunch Whig,

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1. Works Vol.8.p.512.

2. Principles of Government p.5

but very wrongheaded".[1] He carried the Whig philosophy based on Locke and Cicero's doctrine of power and government, to the extreme. He was wrongheaded as he would never fit in in Westminster party politics. With the Industrial Revolution the forms and methods of the radical movement changed and his political ideas rapidly went out of date. Yet he made a definite mark on the movement for parliamentary reform. His works gave a literary flavour to many political ideas prevalent during that time. He focussed public attention on the essential controversy of the political polemics of the day, that is whether the people had a right to expel an oppressive ruler or not. The trial of Dean Shipley gave the reformers a cause to fight for during the dark days of the eighties.

II

It is generally assumed that the withdrawal of Sir William Jones from the Oxford election and the delay he suffered in obtaining the judgeship in Bengal were due to his too extreme political views. Thus according to Cannon, "he decided to stand for Parliament but facing certain defeat because he was outspoken against the slave trade and the

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1. Horace Walpole to William Mason 19.5.1780. Correspondence Vol.29.p.36.

continuation of the American war, he withdrew his candidacy. No doubt these same liberal and unpopular views delayed his judgeship".[1] A similar view is expressed by Arberry[2] though with much caution; this is also shared by most writers old and new.[3]

But the opinions on the slave trade and the American war were not an issue in the election. Jones did not pronounce his indignation against the slave trade until September 1780, at least seven days after the withdrawal from the election,[4] though his dislike of the trade can be traced in his correspondence.[5] Sir William ~~Deblen~~ Dolben, who got the seat in 1780, was a friend of Wilberforce.[6] In our

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1. Cannon, G. Annotated Bibliography pp.XIV-XV.

2. Arberry, New Light on Sir William Jones B.So.A.S. Vol.XI. p.673.

3. Parry, A.M.A. wrote in her unpublished biography of Jones, "He had made his opinion known by means of several small tracts he published which were too advanced for those times and he therefore saw the propriety of withdrawing from the contest". N.L.W. 5733 d. Cf. Ward, W.R. Georgian Oxford pp.277-78.

4. He wrote to Dr. Wheeler at Oxford on 2nd September informing him that he had declined the Poll and on 9th September he wanted to deliver his speech in which he attacked the slave trade. However he was unable to deliver it and he published only 25 copies of the speech later in the same month. Shore, J. Memoirs p.179 and A speech on the nomination of the candidates to represent the county of Middlesex.

5. Letter to George John 8.1.1777. Spencer papers.

6. Bayley, A.R. Sir William Jones. Notes and Queries July 1910 p.2.

opinion it was the lack of political organisation which was responsible for his failure to secure sufficient support to stand for the election, though he might have lost a considerable number of votes through his political views.

As early at 29 April 1780, when the resignation of Sir Roger Newdigate from the House of Commons was known, Jones expressed his desire to stand as a candidate.[1] But a seat in the House of Commons must have been in his mind for some time. A place in Parliament was an important landmark in the career of the upper class youth in the eighteenth century in England.[2] Jones's mother also set his mind towards this end; Jones stated that an added reason for standing in the election was his mother's will: "My mother destined me for the service of my country and her will is sacred".[3] His frustration in securing a definite answer from the Treasury in connection with the judgeship in Bengal, intensified his urge to look for a career elsewhere: "On the whole if nothing be determined as to my promotion before the end of this session I shall

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1. Letter to George John 29.4.1780. Spencer papers.
2. Namier, L. Structure of Politics pp.1-61.
3. Letter to Lady Georgiana 18.5.1780. Spencer papers.

spend a few weeks in deliberating and consulting my best friends, whether it will not be wiser for me to renounce all idea of the judgeship and to enter boldly on my political career".[1] The opportunity was opened when Sir Roger, who had sat in the House for Oxford for some years, resigned in Spring 1780.

Jones was a latecomer in the contest. When the resignation of Sir Roger Newdigate was confirmed Sir William ~~Doblen~~ Dolben's name was proposed as a candidate for the election. Later some members of Convocation approached University College and successfully got Scott's name nominated by the College.[2] Sometime after this "some young lawyers set up Jones as a man equally qualified for that high post".[3] Jones was rather hesitant to stand until he was sure of getting an "honourable nomination", which to him meant at least a support of fifty voters.[4] He wrote to William Adams, the Master of Pembroke College,

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1. Letter to George John 12 .3.1780. Spencer papers.
2. Charles Parker to Roger Newdigate Sat. morn. (1780) n.d. Newdigate Papers.B2141. C.R.O.Warwick.
3. Op.cit.
4. Letter to George John 29.4.1780. Spencer papers.

asking whether he would stand a chance of getting such nomination.[1] Presumably it was due to Adam's assurances that he allowed his friends to nominate him as a candidate.

Jones was conscious of his shortcomings. He knew he came late in the contest; his political views were unpopular; and his business in the circuit did not allow him much time to acquaint himself with the voters in Oxford. He and his friends decided to put these right. On 5 May an Address[2] to the electors was issued anonymously by his friends.

In this, Jones explained that he was not nominated by his college, "though he was a Fellow there, because his friends presumed that he would receive his post in Bengal in a short time. So his college decided to support Scott, the other Fellow of the college. But Jones declared that he was then nominated by friends from other colleges.

In the Address Jones made some self advertisement of his virtues, how he would not solicit votes among Masters of Arts, and how he was attached to the interest of the University. To prove his points, passages from his

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1. Letter to William Adams (April) 1780 as published in Notes and Queries July 1910 p.3.

2. Address to the University of Oxford Gough.Bodl.Oxf. 90(22).

several publications, where he made honorable mention of the University, were added to the Address.[1]

To Jones the election at Oxford was a fight between two contesting parties, Tories and Whigs. The Tories being the stronger of the two, he thought that his strategy would be to divide the Tories and unite the Whigs. The Whigs were the only party which stood against the executive and for the people. So in all his correspondence he stressed that the political principles of Scott and Doblen were those of the Tories, and he appealed to the old Whigs to rally around him in support of independence. He mostly concentrated his attacks on Scott; this, he believed, would work both ways - Scott would be exposed as a Tory, and so Tory votes would be divided, and the Whigs would leave Scott for Jones.[2]

To overcome the other difficulty, that he was not a resident in Oxford for long enough to gain the support of the voters, Jones relied mostly on non-residential voters. He sent circular letters to men who had substantial influence on them. In these, Jones gave his reasons for standing for

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1. The passages were taken from the following works (a) Lettre à mon .... d... p. 1771; (b) Dedication to Commentaries on Asiatick Poetry; (c) Conclusion of the preface on the same work; (d) Preface of the history of the Life of Nader Shah; and (e) Speech at Oxford Theatre.

2. Letter to George John.May 1780. Spencer papers.

the election; it was to "answer the purpose of the franchise granted to the academical body, namely to protect as Blackstone says, in the Legislature the rights of the republick of letters".[1] Such a letter was sent to his Dutch friend Schultens,[2] who had some friends in Oxford. Horace Walpole also received one, and rejected it as "absurd and Pedantic".[3]

Despite discouragement from some friends,[4] Jones carried on his campaign, made out lists of voters, and sent them to friends, to study them carefully and to make new additions if they were incomplete. He urged his friends to exert their influence on the voters in his favour. Meetings were held in his support.[5] But Jones and his friends failed to understand the intricate electoral problems in Oxford. It was not the non-resident voters who decided an election in Oxford of the eighteenth century but the colleges.[6] Jones received no solid support from

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1. Letter to George John 29.4.1780. Spencer papers.
2. Letter to Schultens 13.5.1780. BPL. 245 XIII Leiden.
3. Horace Walpole to William Mason 19.5.1780. Correspondence Vol.29.pp.35-36.
4. "I own I am much discouraged and think if you are not pretty sure you shall make a tolerable figure, you had better give it up". Letter from Lady Georgiana 22.5.1780. Spencer papers. Similar views were expressed by others. Letter from Schultens 2.6.1780 as published in Shore, J. Memoirs p.178.
5. Letter to Lady Georgiana 22.5.1780. Spencer papers.
6. Ward, W.R. Georgian Oxford pp.277-78.

any college, and he had not much influence among the resident voters. He and his friends showed more enthusiasm and less tact. By advertising his virtues Jones antagonised a good number of voters.[1] Moreover since 1772 when Lord North, the King's favourite, became Chancellor of the University, the Treasury increased its influence on the voters. To them a writer of an Ode to Liberty was a suspicious character. Their worst suspicion was confirmed when Jones gave his plan for suppressing riots, which aimed at curtailing the power of the executive as much as putting down the masses.[2] He also failed to gain support from the old Whig families who were great figures at Westminster, and might have exerted influence in his favour. He could not get much support from Rockingham, as Burke was against him.[3]

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1. Charles Parker told Sir Roger Newdigate, about the Address, "This being circulated by his consent, if not desire, seems so like being one's own trumpeter and approving yourself before you are approved of by others, that I think it will do him much more harm than good". Newdigate papers B2141.

2. "I have been told that the very ode to which you have been so indulgent lost me near twenty votes", Letter to E. Cartwright 8.9.1780. as published in Shore, J. Memoirs p.184.

3. Jones wrote to Lady Georgiana that all in Turk's Head (where Johnson's Literary Club met) except Burke were his friends. Letter to Lady Georgiana 26.5.1780. Spencer papers.

So Jones failed. He was a latecomer, he did not know the real rules of the game, he had no patron or good election manager - and his political ideas alienated a considerable number who would have voted for him otherwise. By 30 August he made up his mind[1] and on 2 September he asked Wheeler[2] to make it known in the University that he had declined the poll.

After the episode of the Oxford election one can trace bitterness in Jones. He failed to make much headway in his law practice, he was kept waiting for the judgeship in Bengal for a long time, and he failed to gain support for a seat in the Commons. He felt that England had no freedom, that the country was corrupted, and that people with a love for independence and liberty had no place there: "In the great orchestra of politics I find so many musicians out of humour and instruments out of tune, that I am more tormented by such dissonance than the man in Hogarth's print; and I am more desirous than ever of being transported to the distance of five thousand leagues from all this fatal discord".[3]

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1. Letter to George John 30.8.1780. Spencer papers.
2. Letter to Dr. Wheeler 3.9.1780. as published in Shore, J. Memoirs p.179.
3. Letter to Lady Georgiana 21.10.1782. as published in Shore, J. Memoirs, p.219.

So he turned his attention more towards India and America. If he received his post in India he would be able to carry on his work on Oriental literature, if he did not he would turn to America where the "noblest of all men" lived. From the beginning he was against the war and supported the Americans; now he was even willing to migrate to America:[1] "I am very ready (as I need not repeat) to traverse immense seas and burning sands, desiring only that the Chancellor will say yes or no and declaring with perfect coolness that if he will not put me out of suspense, I will put myself out of it and accept a noble offer that has been made me by the noblest of men among whom I may not only plead causes but make laws and write them on the bank of my own river and under my own oak". He always advised people to go to America, "If young Englishmen had any English spirit, they would finish their education by visiting the United States instead of flitting about Italy and strive rather to learn political wisdom from republicans than to pick up a few superficial notions of the ~~five~~ fine arts from the poor thralls of bigotry and despotism".[2]

He was prevented from leaving for America[3] by the

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1. Letter to George John 21.10.1782. Spencer papers.
2. Letter to Arthur Lee 28.10.1788. B.M. 37,232 ff.85-87.
3. Letter to George John 27.10.1782. Spencer papers.

Shipley family and also by the hope that he would ultimately get his post in India. This affair of obtaining a judgeship in Bengal is most intriguing, and we shall not know why Jones was kept waiting until we have access to the Lansdowne papers at Bowood.[1] From what we now know, it appears that Jones was kept waiting for the post not so much for his political views as for his personal relationship with the Lord Chancellor Thurlow.

In 1778 when a post was vacant in Bengal, Lord Bathurst was the Chancellor. Had Jones had the right qualifications he would have been appointed to the post, as Bathurst was a friend of his.[2] But later in the same year Lord Thurlow became the Lord Chancellor in North's ministry. Jones disliked Thurlow and considered him to be a "beast".[3] There was another candidate in F.H. Hargrave, Recorder of Liverpool and a King's Counsel.[4] His name appeared as a successful candidate in the Court calendar for two subsequent years and he was friendly with the Chancellor.

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1. H.M.C. R. VI. p. 239.
2. Letter to Lady Georgiana 29.5.1778. Spencer papers.
3. Letter to Burke 25.2.1783. Burke papers, Wentworth muniments.
4. A.B. Vol.I p. 457

Why Thurlow was unable to send him to India we do not know. It may be that Hargrave himself, who was a friend of Jones, did not like to take the post and deprive Jones of it. However, by 29 June 1781 Hargrave accepted a post of King's Counsel,[1] so from then on Jones had no competitor. It was then entirely up to the Chancellor to decide whether to give him the post or not. When Rockingham came to power in 1782 Jones hoped to gain support. But he was soon discouraged to find Thurlow in the Cabinet. He wrote to Burke, and Kenyon to persuade the Chancellor at least to give him a definite answer. His last hope was Shelburne. As early as April 1782 Jones approached Shelburne[2] through Dunning (Lord Ashburton) whom he knew from 1775, when they covered the same circuit in Oxford and Wales.[3]

In the Autumn when he was in France, after he had failed to visit the United States, he hurried back to England as: "Shelburne had written me word that he had nothing more at present than to procure a desirable station for me in Bengal".[4] But after waiting for nearly four

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1. A.B. Vol.I. pp. 464-65.
2. Letter to Earl Shelburne 22.4.1782. ~~Lancaster~~ Lacaita-Shelburne papers, William L. Clements Library.
3. Letter to George John 14.4.1775. Spencer papers.
4. Letter to E. Burke 8.10.1782. Burke papers, Wentworth muniments.

months Jones grew tired, "I certainly did not love Lord Shelburne nor had I any reason to love him for my own sake, or for that of the publick; but I must have been grateful to him, if he had kept his solemn promises, often repeated verbally and in writing, of placing me on the bench at Calcutta".[1]

In the end it was Lord Ashburton who used his good offices to persuade Shelburne to procure the seat for Jones. In March the King personally intervened; he wrote to Thurlow, "I find from Mr. Townshend that Lord Shelburne will think himself unkindly treated if Mr. Jones is not sent to the East Indies on the vacancy of Judge which has subsisted some years; I shall take it as a personal compliment to me if you will consent to it. Lord Ashburton answers for his being a competent as a lawyer and his knowledge of Eastern languages is a very additional qualification".[2] Thurlow gave in and Jones got his appointment. He was Knighted, he married and left for India from Portsmouth by the Crocodile on 12 April 1783.

How did Jones reconcile his political ideas with the Indian situation? In England he maintained that the law is

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1. Letter to E. Burke 25.2.1782. Burke papers. Wentworth muniments.

2. George III to Thurlow March 1783. Correspondence Vol.VI. pp.253-254.

the aggregate will of the people and that the state is made up of the whole community, and the rulers are but servants of the people. But in India he was appointed a judge not by the people there but by their foreign masters. The problem was sarcastically posed by Dean Tucker in his sequel to Jones's Dialogue: "I wish to know, whether he himself allows the consequences of his own doctrine, when put in practice against his own interest? Doth he or doth he not permit the poor enslaved Gentoos and plundered Indians to dispute his authority, and disobey his commands, by telling him to his face that they never chose him to be the judge of their country"?[1] Jones was conscious of this problem,[2] which was one which most liberals and social democrats of later times faced when they came to rule a colony. They were unable to practise the doctrines which they preached at home. In a later chapter we will see how Jones reconciled his political ideas with the Indian situation and consequently developed a theory of Indian government and law.

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1. Tucker, J. Sequel, p.22.

2. He wrote to Gibbon in 1781, "My system is purely speculative, and has no relation to my seat on the bench in India where I should hardly think of instructing the Gentoos with the maxims of the Athenians". Works (~~1807~~) Vol.I.p.387.

CHAPTER V.

The foundation and early years of the Asiatick Society.

On 12 April 1783, Jones left Portsmouth on the frigate Crocodile for India. At last his dreams were coming true; and he could explore the art and literature of Asia in the continent itself. He had married the lady whom he had known for nearly sixteen years but to whom he was unable to propose until he had sufficient means and a high position in society.[1] He was a judge in Calcutta with a salary of £6000 a year and had been knighted a few days previously. In India he wanted to stay for six years in order to save as much as £30,000 so that he could retire in England with the independence he desired so much.[2] So he was prepared to lead a frugal life. But saving was only one motive of his self-discipline.

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1. Supra p. 48-51
2. "I need not add how heartbreaking a thing it will be for me to leave you for six years, nor would I leave you, my dear friend if I did not consider that at our time of life five or six years make no very material difference and if it should be my good fortune to return to England at the age of seven or eight and thirty years with thirty thousand pounds in my chest I shall then perhaps be able to concur with you and other friends of liberty and virtue in defending our constitution, amending our laws and encouraging letters". Letter to George John, 24.4.1778. Spencer papers, ~~Althorp~~.

He could not waste much time. As he intended to gather as much knowledge of India as he could during his stay in Calcutta, he would have to make stringent economies in whatever leisure time he might have after the discharge of his duty as judge. He started his rather frugal and not very exciting life on board, long before he reached India. During the six months' voyage his time was almost equally divided between his wife and his books. "My daily studies are now what they will be for six years to come, Persian and law, and what ever relates to India, my recreation chess my exercise walking on deck an hour before dinner, but my great delight is the sweet society and conversation of Anna Maria whose health and spirits are really wonderful in a situation so new to her and by no means pleasing in itself.".[1]

A good part of his time was spent in making plans for the future. By[12] July he had made up his mind about what he should do during his stay in Calcutta. The following memorandum[2] gives us some idea of his plans:-

"The objects of enquiry during my residence in Asia:

1. The laws of the Hindus and Mahomedans,
2. The history of the ancient world,

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1. Letter to George John 22.4.1783. Spencer papers.
2. Shore, J. Memoirs, p.228.

3. Proofs and illustrations of scripture,
4. Traditions concerning the deluge etc,
5. Modern politics and geography of Hindustan,
6. Best mode of governing Bengal,
7. Arithmetic and geometry and mixed sciences of Asiaticks,
8. Medicine, chemistry, surgery, and anatomy of the Indians,
9. Natural products of India,
10. Poetry, rhetoric and morality of Asia,
11. Music of the Eastern Nations,
12. The She-King or 300 Chinese odes,
13. The best accounts of Tibet and Kashmir,
14. Trade, manufactures, agriculture and commerce of India,
15. Mughal constitution,
16. Maharatta constitution."

This memorandum covered the map of human knowledge as drawn by Bacon, who had divided it into three main branches, History, Philosophy and Poetry.[1] The sixteen branches of investigation as given in Jones's memorandum may be classified into three parts, History, Science and Arts. Thus the laws Arithmetic, etc., come under the heading of Science where reason reigns (Bacon would call it Philosophy); the scripture, the traditions concerning the deluge etc., come under History,

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1. Collingwood, R.G., The Idea of History, pp. 57-58.

where memory presides; and the poetry, music, trade and commerce come under Arts, where imagination rules. Thus Jones's work in Asia was to be divided.[1] But how to execute it? He had not yet thought of a plan to form a society to investigate into the Science, History and Arts of Asia. But he knew that he had to gather rare and hitherto unknown manuscripts and seek their explanation from the natives, and this would involve endless discussions with the Asiatics on religion, history, art and other subjects.

On 28 April the Crocodile called for a few days at Johanna, an island off the east coast of Africa en route to India. Here for the first time Jones was confronted by non-Europeans in their own country. Though the ruler of the island was an Arab, most inhabitants were of mixed Arab and African descent. Whatever romantic ideas he might have had about the tribal Arabs he had none for these islanders. In fact considering that this was his first meeting with non-Europeans in the East, he was remarkably shrewd in his judgement ~~on~~ of the character of the people and the nature of their social and political institutions. There was no unnecessary praise nor undue censure in his description of the islanders. What he detested most was

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1. For a further discussion on Jones's conception of human knowledge see infra p.144.

the servile attitude of the people in general and the "nobility" in particular. He noticed that no "principle of honour"[1] was instituted by education into the gentry of the island as they often begged presents and were not hesitant to steal even trivial things like Morocco slippers. He found Prince Salim, the eldest son of the ruler of Johanna, a most despicable character. This prince begged for presents and money and harassed Jones by refusing to cooperate in obtaining an audience for him with the king of Johanna. He also begged Jones to obtain confirmation of his silly titles, given to him by European visitors. Jones was most annoyed, as not only were such titles silly, but they were not in conformity with their own way of life. "There was more dignity in their own native titles than in those of prince, duke and lord, which had been idly given to them but had no conformity to their manners or the constitution of their government".[2]

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1. Remarks on the island of Hizuan or Johanna. As.R.Vol.2 pp.77-110. This paper was read to the society on 1 Nov. 1787 (Transactions) and was published in the Asiatick Researches in 1792. But it must have been written before 11 April 1784 for Jones promised to send a copy of it to Spencer as soon as possible. Letter to George John 11.4.84. Spencer papers.
2. ~~Op.cit., p.81.~~ As. R. Vol. II. p. 81

Jones disliked their slave trade, which was carried on with African prisoners. He also abhorred their treatment of women: "A rational being would have preferred the condition of a wild beast exposed to the perils and hunger in a forest to the splendid misery of being wife and mistress to Salim".[1] His search for manuscripts was unsuccessful. Most of those that were shown to him were useless.

On the other hand he was most impressed by the King. Though he thought his ideas of trade with England was ridiculous, as the island had nothing much to offer, yet "it showed an enlargement of mind a desire of promoting the interest of his people and sense of benefit from trade which could hardly have been expected from a petty African chief and which if he had been sovereign of Yemen might have been expanded into rational projects proportioned to the extent of his dominion".[2] He found that the Arab form of government for the island "though bad enough in itself," was apparently "administered with advantage to the original inhabitants".[3] The monarchy of Johanna was limited by an aristocracy without whose consent the King

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1. ~~Op.cit.,p.83.~~ As. R. Vol. II p. 83.
2. Op.cit.,pp.101-102.
3. Op.cit.

could not declare war or conduct a peace treaty with his enemies. The misrule and violence which could be found in the administration of the island were "probably occasioned by the insolence of an oligarchy naturally hostile to king and people."[1] By putting the blame on the oligarchy Jones betrayed his dislike for nobility and landowners.

Jones was impressed by Prince Hamdullah who was a qazi and a scholar. His only regret was that this prince had not had much time to spare for interviews with him. Above all he liked Alavi, a brother of the governor; he was more communicative than the other nobles, as he spoke good English. His knowledge of European affairs surprised Jones, who had long discussions with him on various topics ranging from the slave trade to the divinity of Christ. Here for the first time Jones came out into the open in defending his religion. But the religious dispute ended cordially and Jones promised to help Alavi in some legal matters.

But Jones had no illusions regarding the relationship between the Europeans and the natives. "In truth our nation is not cordially loved by the inhabitants of Hizuan (Johanna), ...

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1. As. R. Vol. II
~~Op.cit.~~, pp.105-108.

as it commonly forms a general opinion from a few instances of violence or breach of faith".[1] One such violent act had taken place recently, when a woman was badly treated and a man was murdered. The Englishman responsible for this escaped justice. On another occasion, so Jones was told, an English captain cheated Alavi; though he promised to pay him a large sum of money, as Alavi had saved his life, he never paid up.

This visit to the island left a deep imprint in Jones's mind. His future attitude towards Asia was influenced by his experiences in Johanna.

II

On 25 September 1783 the Crocodile reached Calcutta.[2] Jones spent his first few months meeting people and settling down in his new home.[3] His early correspondence from Calcutta shows him in a relaxed mood. Now he was away from England, from political bickering, from Association movements and from the frustrating years of unsuccessful

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As. R. Vol.II

1. ~~Op.cit~~.,p.106.
2. Hickey thought that Jones arrived in Calcutta sometime at the end of August '83. Memoirs Vol.III pp.154-155. But he was wrong as the Crocodile reached Balasore on 13 September (see B.M.16264 f.232) and on 25.9.1793 Jones recalled that he arrived in Calcutta ten years before that date. Letter to George John. 25.9.1793. Spencer papers.
3. B.M.16264. f.242 and Hickey, Vol.III p.155.

attempts to gain a place in high society. Now he was in a city which appeared "large" and "well-peopled" yet "airy and commodious" of which the houses were in "general well built and some often equal to palaces".[1] Here he could not be disturbed, and he could spend his leisure as he wished. "Of myself" he wrote, "I will only say that disliking as I did the politicks and parties of Britain I am very glad to be out of their way and to amuse myself a few years in this wonderful country".[2] But soon this rather relaxed mood was at an end, as a very busy and active life was ahead of him.

During this time there were in Bengal a group of young officers who were keenly interested in Asiatic studies. Among them were Charles Wilkins, Nathanial Halhed (a friend of Jones since 1768) John Shore, Francis Gladwin, John Carnac, Jonathan Duncan and William Chambers. Most of these were to be the founding fathers of the Society and to contribute regularly to the Society's journal. However, these people did not form a group in pursuit of their researches, nor were they personal friends, as they belonged to different political factions in the Bengal politics of

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1. Letter to George John 14.10.1783. Spencer papers.
2. W.J. to G.J.S. 6.11.1783.

the period. No doubt Halhed and Wilkins struck up a friendship when they were at Hoogly and together they produced the first Bengali typeface in 1778,[1] but most of them carried out their work individually. Often they produced works of great interest. One such work was Gladwin's Institutes of The Emperor Akbar an abridged version of Abul Fazl's famous work.[2] Charles Wilkins, who came to India in 1770, from 1778 turned his interest to Sanskrit and Persian, following the example of Halhed.[3] In 1776 Halhed at the age of 23 produced his famous Gentoo Laws, which two years later was followed by his A grammar of Bengal languages. These people worked against great odds; there was a lack of books and manuscripts and they were short of time. They had no way of putting their researches before the learned people of Europe.[4] In 1781 Wilkins brought out a translation of an inscription

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1. Halhed,N.,Preface, A grammar of Bengali languages, pp.XXIII-XXV, and G.M.,n.s.Vol.6. pp.97-98.
2. Gladwin F., The Ayin Akbery on the Institutes of the Emperor Akbar, London, 1777.
3. D.N.B.
4. Though Halhed's Gentoo Laws received universal attention throughout Europe this was an exception. The works of other English Orientalists did not receive much attention. Halhed's Grammar was not reviewed until 1784 (M.R.vol. 70 pp.367-369) and Gladwin's Institute received full consideration only in 1788 (M.R.vol.79 pp. 615-636), after Jones had gone to Bengal.

written in Sanskrit but in characters which had fallen out of use. This was the Monghyr Inscription of Devapāla written in Kuṭīla characters.[1] It was the first attempt at deciphering old Indian characters, but no notice of such a revolutionary move was taken until the translation was republished in the first volume of the Asiatick Researches.[2] We have no knowledge of the methods Wilkins used in deciphering these characters, which later helped him to read the Gupta Brāhmī.[3] The position of Orientalism, in Bengal prior to Jones's arrival there, is best summed up in John Shore's letter to Ford, then Professor of Arabic at Oxford, "Some books have lately been published in Bengal but the expense of printing them is so enormous and the reputation derived from the labours of translating so little that few attempts more will be made."[4] He complained that there were not enough Arabic books," amongst the variety of Arabic authors quoted or mentioned by Mr.Jones in his commentaries, I do

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Wilkins, C.

1. A translation of a Royal Grant of land by one of the ancient Raajahs of Hindoostan, Calcutta, 1781.
2. As.R.Vol.I.pp.123-130. In 1788 when the first volume of the Asiatick Researches came out Wilkins was made a Fellow of the Royal Society. G.M.n.s.Vol.6.pp.97-98.
3. Wilkins C., Two Inscriptions from the Vindhya mountains., As.R.Vol.II.pp.167-169. cf. Classical Age, p.67.
4. Shore C., Memoirs, pp.103-4.

not, the Koran excepted recollect one that is found here."[1] However they carried on their work bravely. Wilkins was labouring hard in translating the Mahābhārata. Halhed collected numerous Persian manuscripts.[2] Shore himself had done the same; "I have in my possession Persian translations of many valuable Sanskrit books of Religion and Morality; and these were acquired within six months only. A Brahmin is also ready to attend me whenever I want him; and from him I find I can depend on my Persian versions."[3] He made an attempt to assess the nature of Hinduism, "in fact it is pure Deism and has a wonderful resemblance to the doctrines of Plato. I doubt if any of his writings are more metaphysically abstract than some of the Hindoos".[4] This was the conclusion that Holwell[5] and Dow[6] had already arrived at and that Jones was to arrive at later. However Shore's letter shows that Orientalism in Calcutta was in danger of disintegrating unless some new life was put into it. This was what Sir William Jones did. Robert Orme, who was a well wisher of Jones and had lent a hand in his

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1. Shore, C. Memoirs Op.cit.,pp.101-102.
2. Op.cit.,pp.107-8.
3. Op.cit.
4. Op.cit.,pp.107-8.
5. Supra, p. 18.
6. Supra, p. 18.

obtaining the judgeship in Bengal thought that no-one before Jones had just ideas "previously acquired" about the life and manners of the Indians. So his hours of leisure, spent on Asiatic studies would be most ~~revealing~~ rewarding to the Orientalists.[1] Jones's fame had already reached Bengal long before his arrival there and Shore and others were pleased to have him among them: "If Mr. Jones should as we are taught to expect, arrive in Bengal I may venture to pronounce that not withstanding the disadvantages he will labour under from the want pf pronunciation he will possess more real knowledge of the Persian and Arabic languages than any person here Native or European".[2]

The only man to encourage the young officers who were thus pioneering in the field of Indology was Warren Hastings, who had been ruler of Bengal since 1772. A history of Orientalism is incomplete without a mention of Hastings. He came to India at an early age and a long stay in the country had made him an admirer of Indian manners and customs. He mastered the Persian language, gathered Indian paintings and manuscripts, and in his letters to his wife used to quote from the Gītā, which

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1. Letter from R. Orme. 12.3.1784. Orme Collection 202. 253.
2. Shore, C. Memoirs, p.103.

he found a source of inspiration.[1] It was only natural that he should patronise Oriental learning. He encouraged most of the pioneer Indologists in their work, fought for them in the Supreme Council[2] and held long discussions with them on their subjects.[3] They acknowledged their debt to this man. In 1781 Wilkins dedicated his first work to Hastings."As it was by your immediate counsel I undertook to translate this very curious relick of Hindu antiquity, I think it my duty thus publicly to acknowledge such a distinguishing mark of your favour".[4] Similar sentiments were expressed by Shore and Halhed in their letters and works.[5]

Hastings's encouragement of Oriental studies had a practical side. He had his own ideas of how India should be ruled. He was ready to assert British sovereignty. The so-called "dual government" was to go, and the Company was to take the management of the whole of Bengal into its own hands. But this did not mean the introduction of English laws and English ways

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1. Feiling, K. Warren, Hastings, p.399.
2. H.M.S. 207. (2).
3. Halhed to Hastings Gentoo Laws, p. VI.
4. Wilkins C. A translation of a royal grant of land.
5. Halhead N. Preface Gentoo Laws. cf. Shore, J. Memoirs, pp.237-239.

in India. His idea was to rule the conquered in their own way. This was how the Romans maintained their empire, this was how he could elevate "the British name".[1] He founded the Calcutta Madrasa and provided money for it to "soften the prejudices "which he said were "excited by the rapid growth of the British dominion".[2] Thus he wanted to reconcile British rule with Indian institutions. This meant a further investigation into the manners and customs of the country, and more studies in the literature and the laws of the Indians. The Gentoo Laws of Halhead was one realisation of his schemes. Halhead echoed Hastings's ideas: "The importance of the commerce of India and the advantages of a territorial establishment in Bengal have at length awakened the attention of the British legislature to every circumstance that may conciliate the affections of the natives or ensure stability to the acquisition. Nothing can so favourably conduce to these two points as a well timed toleration in matters of religion and adoption of such original institutes of the country, as do not immediately clash with the laws or interests of the conquerors".[3] Recently[4] it has been

1. Feiling, K. Warren Hastings p.236.
2. Op.cit.,
3. Halhed, N. Gentoo Laws, p. IX.
4. Stokes, E., The English utilitarians and India, pp. 3-4.

suggested that the Gentoo Laws was a reaction against North's Regulation Act of 1773. But there is nothing in this Act which would prevent Hastings from ruling India according to Indian laws.[1] Even his enemy Philip Francis had similar ideas.[2] Cornwallis was later to abolish Hastings's personal form of government and replace it by an impersonal "system", but neither he nor any other governor general had any intention of attacking the Indian way of life. Jones worked with Cornwallis for eight years and the society flourished. In this way the Marquis was as much a patron of Orientalism as Hastings had been, and its pragmatic value was well realised by the Company's colonial government. Cornwallis attended most annual meetings of the society, Shore, the Marquis of Hastings and Lord Hardinge were its presidents and all the governor generals throughout the period of British rule were its patrons.[3] Later rulers had less sympathy for India and less eagerness to learn about Indian culture, but they all realised that to rule a conquered country the conquerors must have a sound knowledge of the conquered. Just as the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century

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1. Weitzman, S. Warren Hastings and Philip Francis, pp.15-16.
2. Op.cit., pp. 49-60.
3. Centenary Review, pp. 12-13.

was stimulated by the needs of navigation,[1] so Orientalism was stimulated by the birth of colonial rule. Jones predicted this prospect in 1771, "since a variety of causes which need not be mentioned here give the English nation a most extensive power in that kingdom (India), ... the languages of Asia will now perhaps be studied with uncommon ardour; the valuable manuscripts that enrich the publick libraries will be in a few years elegantly printed; the manners and sentiments of the eastern nations will be perfectly known; and the limits of our knowledge no less extended than the bounds of our empire"[2]

As we have seen already,[3] until this time Oriental Research had been chiefly the work of individuals - travellers, missionaries and theologians of the universities - who worked independently of one another. Their methods were far from scientific. Their knowledge of the languages was insufficient, their conclusions were hastily drawn and coloured with prejudices, and most of their works were written to feed the European appetites for the exotic.

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1. Bernal, J.D. Science in History, pp. 310-17.
2. ~~Jones, W.~~ A Persian Grammar, pp. XI-XII.
3. Supra, p. 19

Two forces brought an end to this: one was the establishment of European rule in Asia, and the other the changing methods in the study of what are now called the humanities. In France the Academie des Inscriptions et des Belles Lettres, originally instituted to record the progress of Louis XIV's ambitions, had extended its scope in 1718 to enquiries into the antiquities of France and the other kingdoms.[1] In England the Society of Antiquaries received its Charter in 1751 and by 1780 the Royal Society ceased to be a rival organisation for antiquarian research.[2] In 1768 Sir Joshuah Reynolds established the Royal Academy for the purpose of studying the Arts. This method of organised study was now to be extended to Orientalism. The Batavian Society[3] established by the Dutch in the East Indies in 1778 in its early years chiefly contributed to the study of the natural sciences, though the study of the humanities was not left out.

Before the end of the year 1783 Jones must have come to the conclusion that his plans for Asiatic studies could

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1. Evans, J.A., A History of the Society of Antiquaries, p.176.
2. Op.cit., p.179.
3. Het Bataviaensch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen Gedurende de Eerste Eeuw van Zijn Bestaen, 1778-1878, p.27.

not be realised by a single man or by men working independently. He "considered with pain that in this fluctuating imperfect and limited condition of life such enquiries and improvements could only be made by the united efforts of many".[1] In January 1784 he sent out a circular letter, the text of which is now missing, putting forward a plan to establish a society to encourage Orientalism in Calcutta.[2] This circular was apparently addressed to all those who showed interest in Oriental studies. Thirty gentlemen responded to the letter and on 15 January 1784 they gathered in the Grand Jury room of the Supreme Court of Calcutta. Here Sir Robert Chambers, the Chief Justice, an old Fellow of University College, Oxford, presided at the first meeting and Jones delivered his first famous Discourse.[3] Here he gave his plans for the Society. He stressed the pragmatic value of Oriental studies. Asia was the "nurse of sciences", the "inventress of delightful and useful arts". Europeans could profitably

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1. As.R.Vol.1.p.X.
2. Centenary Review, pp. 1-2.
3. A Discourse on the institution of a society for inquiry into the History,civil and natural, the Antiquities,Arts, Sciences and literature of Asia. In As.R.Vol.I. it was stated that Jones delivered his ~~final~~ first presidential discourse on 30.1.1784. But 30th January was a Friday and there was no meeting of the Society on that day; and Jones had already delivered his address on 15.1.1784 at the first meeting of the Society when Chambers presided. Transactions. 15.1.1784

spend their leisure time in inquiring the laws, religion, forms of government of the Asiatics and the natural wonders of Asia.[1] This would at least help to improve the mode of ruling the new empire.

According to Jones the objects of the inquiries of the Society should be Man and Nature, and "whatever is performed by the one and produced by the other" in Asia. By Asia, Jones meant Asian civilization, for the researches were to be carried out beyond the geographical limits of the continent: "Since Egypt had unquestionably an old connection with this country, if not with China, since the language and literature of the Abyssinians bear a manifest affinity to those of Asia, since Arabian arms prevailed along the African coast of the Mediterranean, and even erected a powerful dynasty on the continent of Europe, you may not be displeased occasionally to follow the streams of Asiatic learning a little beyond its natural boundary".[2] This was the reason why Jones preferred the term "Asiatick" to "Oriental", which was in truth "a word merely relative". There was of course an additional reason: the man who as a boy had composed verses imitating

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1. As.R.Vol.I.,pp.IX-X.
2. ~~As.R.Vol.I.~~,p.XII.
   Op. cit.

Sophocles and who took Cicero as his model preferred "Asiatick" because it appeared "classical and proper".[1]

In this Discourse Jones drew the map of human knowledge according to the plan he had already made during his journey from England. Like Bacon he recognised three faculties of mind, - memory, reason, and imagination, and so the three main branches of learning were History, Science and the Arts. History "comprehends either an account of natural productions or the genuine records of empires and states"; science "enhances the whole circle of pure and mixed mathematics together with ethicks and law as far as they depend on the reasoning faculty"; and arts "includes all the beauties of imagery and the charms of invention".[2] His Discourses were to cover this map of knowledge. While the first two dealt with the plan and methods of research the subsequent eight discourses were on what Jones called History, and the eleventh dealt with Science. The discourse on Arts was never written.

Jones stressed that there should be no formalities or rigid rules for the members of the Society; he wished "to establish but one rule namely to have no rule at all".

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1. ~~op.cit.~~, As. R. Vol I. p. xii.
2. ~~As.R.Vol.I.,p.XIII.~~ Op. cit. p.xii.

He hoped to hold weekly meetings in the Grand Jury Room where original papers,[1] should be read and discussed. No translations except of those papers written by Indian authors would be allowed. If there ~~were~~ was sufficient materials towards the end of each year then "let us present our Asiatick miscellany to the literary world."[2] Jones recommended the Society, "on no account to admit a new member who has not expressed a voluntary desire to become so; and in that case you will not require I suppose any qualification than a love of knowledge and a zeal for the promotion of it".[3] He did not recommend that Indians should be allowed to become members of the society; it was left to the others to decide whether they would enrol as members "any numbers of learned natives."[4] It was not until 1829 that Indians were admitted as members of the Society.[5] But some Indian scholars contributed to its Journal regularly from the very first number.

After they had heard Jones's Discourse the gentlemen gathered at the Grand Jury room thanked him, agreed with its contents, and called themselves the Asiatick Society.[6]

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1. As.R.Vol.I,p.XV.
2. ~~As.R.Vol.I.p.XVI.~~ Op. cit. p.XVI.
3. ~~op.cit.,p.XVI.~~ Op. cit.
4. ~~As.R.Vol.I.pXV.~~ Op cit. p. XV.
5. Centenary Review,p.8.
6. Transactions 15.1.1784.

The birth of the Asiatick Society is a milestone in the history of Orientalism. By establishing it Jones helped to usher in the age of scientific specialisation, by forming a society which would study the Asiatics at close quarters and draw conclusions about their social political and economic institutions from the observations of its members. Thus Bacon's methods were extended to Orientalism. The Society was to contribute to the comparative study of law, and sociology. This was one realisation of Fergusson's idea of the graphic study of man. As early as 1763, Fergusson regretted that while human knowledge of the material system of the world "consists in a collection of facts or at most in general tenets derived from particular observations and experiments", human knowledge of man himself was still based on "hypothesis".[1] Such sentiments were echoed by Monboddo[2] and Herder[3] who demanded that there should be an objective study of man and his culture. In 1786 Jones was studying Fergusson's work for the second time.[4] He must have known about

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1. Fergusson, A. History, pp. 3-4.
2. Monboddo, Lord. Progress of Language, Vol.1. pp. 1-4.
3. Herder, J.S., Philosophy of History, pp.161-162.
4. Letter to J.Macpherson 6.5.1786, as published in Shore, J.Memoirs p.275. Later in Nov. 1788 he told Macpherson "I am correcting proofs of our transactions which will, I hope, satisfy Mr. Ferguson". Memoirs. p.257.

idea of the
the graphic study of man through his friend Monboddo.[1] Jones consciously modelled the Society on the Royal Society in England. Since the King was the patron of the Royal Society it was decided that the Governor General and his Council should be asked to become patrons of the new Society. Accordingly on 22 January two letters were sent, one to the Governor General and the other to the Supreme Council. The first invited Warren Hastings to become the first president of the Society and the other requested the Council to "honour us with accepting the title of our patrons".[2] The Council readily agreed, "we very much approve and applaud your endeavours to promote the extension of knowledge in a degree perhaps exceeding those of any part of the globe".[3] Thus the Society received official blessing from the very beginning. However, Hastings declined the invitation, "from an early conviction of the utility of the institution it was my anxious wish that I might be by whatever means instrumental in promoting the success of it; but not in the mode which you have here

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1. He knew Monboddo through the Bishop of St.Asaph, at whose house many eminent men such as Johnson dined. Letter to George John. 29.9.1788. Spencer papers. Monboddo corresponded with Jones when the latter was in India. Letter to Monboddo.24.8.1788 as published in Shore, J. Memoirs pp.321-322.
2. Transactions 24.1.1754.Also As.R.Vol.1.p.v.
3. As.R.Vol.1. p.VI.

proposed which I fear would rather prove if of any effect an inconvenience on it". He suggested that the post should be given to the gentleman "whose genius planned the institution and is most capable of conducting it to the attainment of the great and splendid purposes of its function".[1] This letter from Warren Hastings was read to the Society on 5 February. Meanwhile on 24 January David Anderson had proposed William Jones as the Vice-President and G.H.Barlow as the Secretary of the Society.[2] These two posts were formally balloted for and Jones and Barlow were elected at the third meeting of the Society held on 29 January.[3] However on 5 February the Society passed a resolution which thanked Warren Hastings and requested Jones to "reaccept" the offer of President of the Society.[4] The term "reaccept" is rather odd, as there is no indication that Jones had been previously requested to become President or that he had accepted such a request before 5 February. It may be that the writer was carried away by his pen.

During the first ten years of its life the President had to struggle hard to keep the society alive. He advised

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1. As.R.Vol.1.pp.VII and VIII.
2. Transactions. 24.1.84.
3. Op.cit., 29.1.84.
4. Op.cit., 5.2.84.

that the members should follow a middle course between "languid remissness and an over zealous activity",[1] to ensure permanence and success. But it was no easy task to avoid "languid remissness" in Calcutta, where life was uncertain and light entertainment easily available. If the Calcutta Gazette[2] is any indication of their interests most Anglo-Indians (in the old sense of the term) took little notice of the activities of the Society. Their chief interests were the latest news of the war with Tipoo, masquerades in Calcutta, new fashions in furniture and dress, and recapturing runaway slaves. However there was a small number who were keenly interested in Asiatic studies. Almost all of these were high company officials busy at their respective tasks and often posted to places far away from the capital. So though membership increased from 30 in 1784 to 110 in 1792 the attendance at an ordinary meeting was never more than fifteen, and usually the figure was as low as seven or eight. For the first month the Society met once a week as was originally resolved. But soon there was no such regularity and it met once a fortnight or even at longer intervals. In the first ten years

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1. As.R.Vol.I,p.XI.
2. Seton-Karr, W.S., Selections from Calcutta Gazettes, Vols. 1 and 2.

the Society met little more than 100 times.[1]

Though the attendance was poor and there was little enthusiasm for the Proceedings of the Society among the Anglo-Indians, official support was always given. The annual meetings, which used to attract as many as 30 people, were attended by the Governor General, the members of the Supreme Council, high Company officials and the Judges of the Supreme Court. Here Jones used to deliver his anniversary discourses. The government was ready to supply useful information to the Society;[2] on April 8, 1784 the Governor General sent Samuel Turner's description of Tibet to be read by the Society. Macpherson, who came to govern Bengal after the departure of Hastings gave the Society some official status. He requested them to elect a member, "conversant in the Mohamedan law and customs" as a visitor to the Calcutta Madrasa, who would refer to the Society "the state of the colleges and the progress of the students".[3] William Chambers was elected to this post. The Company also lent its press for the publication of Asiatick Researches in

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1. We do not know the exact number of meetings that took place in the first ten years of the Society's life, as the proceedings of the years between 6.11.1788-5.11.1789 are mislaid, except for 8.1.89. But about 100 meetings are recorded in the transactions now available, so we can assume that there can not have been more than 11 or 12 meetings in the missing year.
2. Transactions, 8.4.1784 and 15.4.1784.
3. Transactions 19.5.1785. cf.letter to J.Macpherson 26.5.1785 as published in Shore, J. Memoirs, p.260.

1788.

But official encouragement alone could not make the new organisation a going concern. It needed sufficient papers to be read and discussed at the meetings. For this more information had to be collected from manuscripts, and from Brahmin and Muslim scholars. Many places of importance like Benares had to be visited to collect data. Then there was the problem of publicity; the Society's activities must be made known in Europe. All these tasks fell on Jones. No doubt there was a secretary,[1] who used to keep the manuscripts and books of the Asiatick Society at his own home, and men like Wilkins, Chapman and Chambers supplied numerous papers, but by 1787 most of the Society's papers were written by Jones and he replied to most of the correspondence of the Society. He corrected papers written by others and read them to the Society in their absence.

The author of Nadir Shah, A Persian Song and the Law of Bailments had collected an odd combination of friends in varied circles throughout Europe. This was fully utilised for the publicity of his and the Society's works. "I have answered fifty very long letters from Europe and a multitude

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1. There were three secretaries during Jone's presidency, G.H.Barlow, J.H.Harrington and E. Morris. Most information about the Society is deduced from my study of the manuscript Transactions from 1784-1794.

of short ones". This was his "annuity of European letters"[1] which he paid annually from Krishnagar, where he purchased a house in 1785. The letters were meant to be circulated among friends. "The annexed discourse will show you how I pass my hours of leisure and you shall know when I am able to inform you fully how my business is conducted. The Bishop of St. Asaph will I trust send you a copy of my speech to the Grand Jury, which contains the outline of my system in administering justice here."[2] Similarly a copy of his "Oriental epistle on silver paper scented with oils of roses" was sent to the Duchess of Devonshire, who was supposed to pass it round.[3] The fame of the Society spread further when Jones published his first Discourse, together with his First Charges to the Grand Jury and a Hymn to Camdeo (Kāmadeva, the Hindu love-god), in 1784.[4] This was very favourably received by Monthly Review.[5] "The same elegant taste and the same ardent spirit which we have so frequently admired in the writings of this extraordinary genius glow with equal lustre

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1. Letter to John Hyde 20.10.1789, as published in Shore, J., Memoirs, p.331.
2. Letter to E.Burke 27.2.1784 Burke papers Wentworth Muniments, ~~Sheffield~~.
3. Letter to George John 12.4.1784. Spencer Papers.
4. ~~Jones W.~~ A charge to the Grand Jury and a Hymn to Camdeo translated from the Hindu into Persian and from Persian into English, London, 1784.
5. Monthly Review, Vol. 71, pp. 354-57.

in the Discourse, the Charge and the Hymn". This view was shared by most readers in Europe. Letters started coming in with queries and congratulations. William Marsden, the author of the History of Sumatra, later son-in-law of Charles Wilkins, was most impressed by the Discourse: "I have learned with a degree of pleasure which none but those who have laboured in the field of Asiatic knowledge can experience of the institution of your Society".[1] He applied for membership of the Society which was granted. Dr. Robert Watson, Bishop of Llandaff who as Professor of Divinity in Cambridge had suggested that an Oriental Institute should be formed in the University, was another to welcome the birth of the Society.[2] His interests were of course mainly theological. He was concerned to find confirmation of the Biblical tradition in Hindu literature, and asked whether there was "any marks of Judaism among any of the casts" or "any reason to believe that Indians are not derived from the same Noaic stock with ourselves".[3] Sir George Younger, a correspondent of Jones, put a series of questions before the Society concerning the history, antiquities, religion and philosophy of the

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1. Transactions 10.11.1785.
2. A.M.Vol.1.pp.1-17 and Transactions 10.11.1785.
3. Transactions 10.11.1785.

"original people of Hindustan". He also urged the Society "to endeavour to trace whether in the worship of water, some allusion may not be preserved, with regard to the destruction of mankind, by certain divine persons, who were saved on a mountain from destruction".[1] All these and other letters came from Europe as a result of Jones's own correspondence and his first publication from India.

Soon it was realised that a magazine solely devoted to Orientalism would be most fruitful. Francis Gladwin, a member of the Society, who had had experience as an author and a journalist,[2] brought out a magazine Asiatick Miscellany[3] in 1785. This contained mainly translations from eastern literature, extracts from old works, poems on Oriental subjects and a few original papers. The title was taken from the first Discourse of the President, who readily provided the magazine with some contributions. But Jones did not approve of the plan of publication: "The Asiatic miscellany to which you allude is not the publication of our Society, who mean to print no scraps, nor any more translations".[4] Jones had his own plan for a

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1. ~~op.cit.~~, Transactions. 10.11.1785.
2. Francis Gladwin, a member of the Asiatick Society and author of various works, was also the editor of the Calcutta Gazette.
3. There were only two volumes of this Miscellany. In 1787 Gladwin started another magazine called the New Asiatick Miscellany which did not survive after the first issue.
4. Letter to J.C.Walker 11.9.1787 as published in Shore, J., Memoirs pp.290-97.

magazine of the Society, which should be a collection of original papers. On 6 July 1787 the President put forward a proposal to the members, "for having their transactions printed by the superintendents of the Honorable Company's press". This was agreed and it was decided that each member should purchase a copy of the magazine for Rs.20 to help towards the cost of printing.[1] It was also agreed "that the Treatise on Orthography communicated by the President on the 19th February 1784 be printed first as an introductory paper to the transactions and that the astronomical observations communicated by Col.Pearce on the 30th June 1785 stand second".[2] The rest of the contents were to be decided by the President. The publication put a few more tasks on the already overworked Jones. He had to choose the contents carefully as there was a great deal to choose from. He had to read through the proof, correct mistakes and standardise the Sanskrit spellings. Then there was the additional task of reminding the contributors to send their papers in time; Daniel had to be reminded to make an etching of Samuel Davis's drawings of the ruins

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1. Transactions 6.7.1787.
2. Jones told Joseph Banks why such priority was given to Col.Pearce's rather unimpressive article. "He showed his paper about the prediction of comets and evenof earthquakes by the Brahmins and was so offended by our credulity that we were obliged to print his dull papers merely to keep him in tolerable humour".Letter to J.Banks.1.10.1791. D.T.C. Vol.7 pp.265-270.

of Mavalipuram, Beatridge to be chided for not sending his drawings of the Roman coins from Nellore.[1] When it came to the proof reading of the second volume Jones was already tired: "My eyes are weak and my time always occupied, I must have assistance".[2] The Press, though available for the Society, was heavily booked for official papers so the progress in printing was slow. He complained of the slowness of the official press and declared that months after submitting the copy of the first volume of Asiatick Researches, only eight sheets had been printed though he already had materials for two further volumes.[3] At last the first volume came out in January 1789. Earlier Jones had cautioned his friend ~~Spencer~~ George John not to raise too high his "expectation of entertainment or instruction from the transactions of our Society", for "it is not here as in Europe where many scholars and philosophers are professedly without any other pursuit; here every member of our Society is a man of business occupied in his respective line of revenue commerce, law, medicine, military affairs and so forth; his leisure must be allowed in great part to the care of his health even if pleasure engage no share of it, what part of it remains then for literature." So Jones

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1. Letters to Samuel Davis 10.11.1788, 8.11.1789 and 21.2.1790, Davis Papers.
2. Letter to Samuel Davis 8.12.1789. Davis Papers.
3. Letter to George John 11.8.1787 Spencer Papers.

pleaded that Europe should appreciate these shortcomings instead of being surprised that so little had been done. "The world if they are candid" he wrote, "will wonder that we have done so much".[1]

But Jones apprehension was unnecessary. The standard of the Asiatick Researches was as high as that of any other magazine of the period. It produced numerous original papers which would easily appeal to the readers of Archaeologia or Philosophical Transactions. The contents were carefully chosen to satisfy men with varied tastes; it covered philosophy, theology, literature antiquities, studies on the manners of the Indians and the natural sciences. In fact it created a stir in the literary world. The Monthly Review[2] praised it without censure; and the first volume of Asiatick Researches was reviewed in four instalments.[3] The Gentleman's Magazine was more restrained, but it acclaimed the outcome in no lesser terms. Soon all copies were sold and to satisfy the popular appetite a pirate edition was brought out from London.[4] This was followed

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1. Letter to George John 11.8.~~1878~~ 1787 Spencer Papers.
2. M.R.Vol.81. pp. 648-683 and n.s. Vol.I.pp.317-329, pp. 431-445, and 559-568.
3. G.M.Vol.59.,pt.2.pp.1020-21.
4. Such publications were considered a very profitable venture. In 1793 a collection of Jones's dissertations and Hymns was brought out from Dublin and from then onwards until the 1830's almost every other year saw an edition of reprinted papers from the Asiatick Researches.

by translations of this and other volumes in various European languages. Soon the Society's fame spread across the Atlantic. The President of Yale College wrote a 148 page letter to the President of the Asiatick Society, chiefly contesting Jones's chronology of the Hindus.[1] The Massachusetts Historical Society elected Sir William Jones as a corresponding member. This was done not only to honour him but also to establish contact and carry on correspondence with the Asiatick Society: "As the correspondence of literary and philosophical societies established in different nations, is an intercourse of true philanthropy, and has a manifest tendency to increase their friendship and to support that harmony in the great family of mankind, on which the happiness of the world so much depends, it can never solicit your aid without success".[2]

Jones's contribution to the Society was not restricted to publicity, proof reading and organising regular meetings. From 1787 onwards he wrote most of the papers himself and gave all the annual discourses until

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1. Camb.00-1-6.
2. Letter from J.Sullivan 7.2.1795 as published in Shore,J., Memoirs,pp.405-6. This and the letter from the President of the Yale College reached Calcutta long after Jones died.

his death. For all this he had to gather information from manuscripts and from conversations with Muslim and Brahmin scholars. His day started well before sunrise. His daily routine included the study of Sanskrit and law, and an hour in the evening when he used to read Italian with Anna Maria.[1] His holidays in Krishnagar and elsewhere were spent mostly in the search for materials for papers to submit to the Society.

In July 1784 he left for Benares by boat. He wrote to his friend:"In July and during the rainy season I shall live in a floating house on the Ganges as I have resolved to pass my long vacation in a Pinnace on the great river seeing all the principal towns as far as I can proceed and then I shall be able not only to fill volumes for you but even to dictate to Anna Maria a translation of a beautiful Persian tale called the four Dervises for Lady Althorp".[2] But in this trip he did more than write volumes for his friends. He established contacts with British officers in Benares, Bhaglalpur and Malda and persuaded them to write for the Society.[3]

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1. Letter to George John 22.7.1878 Spencer Papers.
2. Letter to George John 12.4.1784 Spencer Papers.
3. The Second Discourse, As.R.Vol.1.p.406.

On his way to Benares, in Bhagalpur, he saw Hastings,[1] who was on his way back to Calcutta, and they discussed Indian literature. Jones received his first taste of the Gītā from Hastings. In Benares he met Aly Ibrahim Khan and other Brahmin pandits, with whom he spent his mornings.[2] On his way back he met Charles Grant at Malda and visited the ruins at Caur with him.[3] The same curiosity, the urge to collect manuscripts and gems of eastern wisdom from the pandits and ~~Maubiris~~ Maulavis, persisted throughout the rest of his life. In Krishnagar he met and discussed regularly every autumn with the pandits from ~~navadrit~~ Navadvip, which he called his third university.[4] These were the Alavis and Hamdullas of India, scholarly, deeply convinced in their own faith, but tolerant and communicative.

But this whole range of activities, which made the Society almost solely his concern, was not always carried on without complaints and moods of depression. "I have written four papers for our expiring society on very ~~cruious~~ curious subjects and have prepared materials for a discourse

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1. Feiling K. Warren Hastings, p.322.
2. Letter to W.Hastings. 7.1.1785 B.M.29,167 f.330.
3. Journal of Charles Grant. 6.2.1785 as published in Morris H. Life of Charles Grant, pp. 82-83.
4. He wrote to George John that ~~Navadrit~~ Nvip was the "third university of which I am a member; and there I finish my education." Letter to George John. 21.8.1787.Spencer Papers.

on the Chinese, the Society is a puny rickety child and must be fed with pap; nor shall it die by my fault; but die it must for I cannot alone support it".[1] But by 1792 he regained his confidence: "I cannot persuade that a dissolution of our Asiatick Society will be a consequence of my departure, while you are constantly making discoveries in astronomy, Wilfond in geography and others in different branches of natural history". He looked forward to seeing the "fourth volume printed before I leave India and the fourteenth at least before I leave this world".[2] He died when the fourth volume was still in press. On 3 April, twenty four days before his death, Jones presided over the meeting of the Society for the last time, when a young man read a paper on the duties of a Hindu wife. This was Henry Colebrooke,[3] who like Jones was a lawyer and an Orientalist. It was he, more than anyone else, who carried out the incomplete task of the pioneer under the patronage of Sir John Shore, the evangelical governor general,[4] who succeeded his friend as the President of the Society.

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1. Letter to John Hyde. 20.10.1789, as published in Shore J., Memoirs, pp. 331-332.
2. Letter to Samuel Davis 20.10.92. Davis Papers.
3. Transactions. 3.4.1794.
4. Op.cit., 1.5.1794.

CHAPTER VI

The beginnings of Indology

The beginning of Indology is generally associated with the birth of the Asiatick Society and Jones is often described as "the Father of Indology". In the textbooks he is particularly credited for three outstanding achievements, the discovery of the common origin of what came to be known as the family of Indo-European languages; the identification of Sandrocottas of the classical sources with Candragupta Maurya of the Indian sources, and the translation of Śakuntalā and the introduction of Sanskrit literature into Europe. Here we attempt to find out how far these claims are true; how far Jones succeeded in using the critical methods, which he prescribed for others, in his own researches and how far his discoveries helped to shape the science of Indology.

1. Comparative Philology: The search for the origin of the families of man.

Ever since the days of King Psametichus[1] of Egypt and perhaps before then men in the West searched for the origins

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1. The story of Psametichus is to be found in the Histories of Herodotus. See Pendersen, H. Linguistic Science in the Nineteenth Century, p.3. I have here summarised the early history of The Linguistic Science from Pendersen's work and from G. Bonfante's article Ideas on the Kinship of the European languages from 1200 - 1800. Journal of World History, Vol. I. pp. 679-699.

of languages and the reason for their similarities and diversities. In the ancient world the Greeks and Romans had little interest in the languages of others, who were considered barbarians. Neither did they reach very far in the pursuit of etymological studies; they were centuries behind the Indians in this science. In the medieval period the situation did not change very much. The Biblical tradition of the Tower of Babel was easily understood, and satisfied the curiosity of men whose knowledge of languages was very limited. There was a tendency to put all languages in chronological order with the Holy language, Hebrew, as the starting point. Any new language discovered was fitted into the pattern.[1]

But not all men were satisfied with classical linguistics and the Biblical tradition. As early as 1194 a Welshman, Giraldus Cambrensis in his Description of Wales noticed the similarities between Welsh and Greek and Latin. Rodericus Ximenez de Rada, a Spanish ~~archibishop~~ Archbishop, recognised that there were various groups of languages in Europe and his groupings were substantially correct. Dante also recognised such a

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1. "The Grammarians carry the older dialect to the family of Heber, the fourth in descent from Noah, and the more modern to Ishmael, the son of Abraham." Richardson, J. A Dissertation on the languages, literature and manners of Eastern nations. (~~1788~~ 1777) p.4.

classification of the languages of Europe, though his division of languages into three groups was less correct than that of Rodericus. With the discovery of printing, books in various European languages crossed national borders easily and reached a wider public than ever before. There was then a possibility of a more comprehensive survey and the recognition of kinship among languages. We find in Germany that J.J. Scaliger, in his work Diatribe on the Languages of the Europeans written in 1599 and published in 1610, divided the languages of Europe into eleven groups. He further subdivided them into four major and seven minor classes. His classification was largely correct, but he decided that the eleven matrices were completely independent of each other.

Meanwhile the Germans had discovered the resemblance between Greek and German, and Franciscous Raphelengius discovered that Persian was very similar to German. It was then thought that Greek, Persian and German were all Germanic languages. Thus by the end of the seventeenth century there were many who recognised the interrelationship of European languages, but they did not attempt to discover the reason for the resemblances and differences. Some, like Scaliger, were satisfied with the theory of independent developments, while others tried to explain the resemblances as due to trade

or invasions, or suggested that Persian was derived from German, or Latin from Greek and so on. They did not yet postulate that most European languages and Persian came from some extinct language. Nor had they, without Pāṇini, the tool to investigate the roots of words.

Marcus Zuerius Boxhorn, a Dutch scholar, was the first to postulate a theory of common origin of the Indo-European languages. He did not publish his work; but through his friend George Horn his ideas were made known to Europe in the latter half of the seventeenth century. He observed that innumerable words are common in the languages of the Greeks and other nations throughout Europe. He conjectured "that the resemblance started from a common source, that is from the common origin of all these peoples".[1] So he postulated some sort of common language which he called Scythian, as the mother of the Greek, the Latin, the German and the Persian from which "like dialects would start". No lesser man than Leibnitz added his authority to this theory of the "Scythian" origin of the peoples and the languages of Europe. In the first volume of the Memoirs of the Berlin Academy (Miscellanea Berolinensia) Leibnitz attacked the

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1. Scythian origin of the peoples and languages of Europe as quoted in Bonfante, G. Ideas on the Kinship etc. p.691.

old ~~Hebnaic~~ Hebraic hypothesis, but he did not support Scaliger's theory of independent development. He put forward a theory which was very similar to that of Boxhorn and he clearly distinguished the Indo-European from the Semitic and the Finno-Ugrian groups, though he failed to add Persian to the other "Scythian" languages.

Meanwhile Job Lidoff, who made a complete study of the Semitic languages as they were known in his time, in 1702 discovered the significance of inflectional forms in the study of languages. His methods were recognised by Heras of Spain. The Hungerian scholar Gyernathi probably learnt these methods from them as he used similar tools in his study of the Finno-Ugrian languages in 1789. Under Catherine II's patronage there appeared in 1786-87 a survey of two hundred languages of Europe and Asia edited by P.S. Pallas, a German scientist and traveller. In France, ~~Héret~~ Fréret, working on the origin of the nations, came to the conclusion in 1743 that by differences and conformity of languages he could distinguish and recognise nations which have a common origin.[1] Though he recognised

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1. Fréret. Vue générales sur ~~l'origin~~ les origines et le mélange des anciennes nations et sur la manière d'en étudier l'histoire. Hist. de. L'AC. des I. et de B.~~L~~L. Tom. 9, pp. 1-3. Bréal thought that Fréret "essaye déjà la méthode et prèsent quelques des modes de découverte de la linguistique moderne". Grammaire Comparée ~~Conferée~~ fn. pp. xvii-xviii. But Fréret was only re-establishing Scaliger's theory of independent groups ~~ad~~ and the science had already taken a further step forward with Boxhorn and Leibnitz.

the significance of resemblance in grammatical structures in the study of languages, he took a step backwards from Leibntiz and Boxhorn by thinking that European languages developed independently of one another.

Thus studies in linguistics reached the threshold of the scientific era by the end of the eighteenth century. By then this science had finally departed from classical and medieval linguistics. There are two factors in this development. Europeans had expanded their horizon, they now knew more languages than ever before, and secondly they had already evolved some scientific methods of the study of language.

Jones was well aware of these developments. He wrote to his Polish Orientalist friend, Prince Adam Czartoryski: "How so many Europeans words crept into the Persian language I know not with certainty. Procopius, I think mentions the great intercourse both in war and peace between the Persians and the nations in the north of Europe and Asia whom the ancients knew by the general name of Scythians. Many learned investigators of antiquity are fully persuaded, that a very old and almost primeval language was in use among these northern nations from which not only the Celtic dialects but even the Greek and Latin are derived".[1] But

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1. Letter to Prince Adam Czartoryski 19.2.1779 as published in Shore J. Memoirs p.168.

Jones had little or no interest in the study of languages per se. Admittedly in 1770 in his Plan of an essay on education he recognised the importance of learning the languages of other nations, but these were of "those people who have been in any period of the world distinguished for their superior knowledge". In Johanna, when a manuscript containing a hymn written in an African language (presumably Swahili) and in Arabic script was presented to Captain Williamson of the Crocodile, Jones declined to examine it as he thought that the study of language had "little intrinsic value" and was "only useful as the instrument of real knowledge which we can scarce expect from the poets of Mozambique".[1] A similar view was expressed in his first Discourse to the Society.[2] So although he acquired a mastery of many languages both classical and modern within a short span of time, he was in his own admission no scientific linguist. He wrote the Persian Grammar, which was at least a good guide to the study of "Shiraj literary dialect"[3] as known from the eighteenth century Persian manuscripts in Europe. But this was not a part of a project of research in languages, it was chiefly meant to help the Englishman

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1. Remarks on the island of Hinzurn or Johanna. As R.Vol.2 p.88.
2. As R. Vol. 1. p.xiv.
3. Cannon,G.H. Sir William Jones's Persian linguistics. J.A.O.S. Vol. 78. p.269.

in the East. The famous letter to Duperron, as we have seen, was a misadventure in the study of linguistics and it was brought out mainly to defend Oxford[1]; moreover his chief arguments against Duperron were historical.[2]

When he came to India he had no plans to study Sanskrit. He left that field to Wilkins: "Happy should I be to follow you in the same track; but life is too short and my necessary business too long for me to think at my age of aquiring a new language ... All my hopes therefore of being aquainted with the poetry, philosophy and arts of the Hindus are grounded on the expectation of living to see the fruits of your learned labour".[3] But his study of Indian laws which his profession required of him and the possibilities of Wilkins' early return to England induced Jones to learn Sanskrit.[4] By 1 March 1785 he received a copy of a Dharma Śāstra from Benares. Jones decided to make a thorough study of the subject, and he asked Wilkins to send a better version of the work.[5] His interest in the subject was further stimulated by practical judicial difficulties; he had to find out the Indian ways of punishing

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1. Supra p. 35.
2. Supra pp. 58-59
3. Letter to Charles Wilkins 24.4.1784 as published in J.A.O.S. Vol. 10 pp. 111-112.
4. Letter to Warren Hastings 23.10.1786. B.M.29, 170 f. 234.
5. Letter to Charles Wilkins 1.3.1785. J.A.O.S. Vol. 10 p.113.

criminals for perjury. He knew that the "beginning of the eighth chapter of Minoo has some rules on the form of oaths." He wanted Wilkins to explain them to him.[1] He regretted that he could not spell Sanskrit properly.[2] But he had to wait until September of that year, when he came to Krishnagar, to learn Sanskrit. At this time the Brahmins were away from the town. "Some are gone to the Rany Bhavany, others to other votaries of Durga from whom they receive presents at this season: but I have found a pleasant old man of the medical cast who teaches me all he knows of the grammar; and I hope to read the Hitapades or some other story book with him. My great object is the Dharmasastra to which I shall arrive by degrees."[3] By then he had already gathered most material for his paper on the Hindus, through the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, the Yugavāsisatha and the Saṅgīta Darpaṇa in their Persian translations.[4]

On 2 February less than four months after he had started learning Sanskrit seriously, he read his famous paper on the Hindus; this contained the often quoted passage which

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1. Letter to Charles Wilkins 6.6.1785 ~~Op.cit.~~ J.A.O.S. Vol. 10. p.114.
2. Letter to Charles Wilkins 26.7.1785 Op.cit. p.114. That his knowledge of Sanskrit was poor is proved from the fact that in writing the Hymns on Hindu gods and goddesses he largely drew on his friends, Johnson and Wilkins. He asked Richard Johnson to write a list of names where "Candeo may be supposed to resort". Letter to R.J. n.d. N.L.W. 1095 E. f.17. It was Wilkins who corrected the proof of The ~~Heg~~ Hymn to Candeo. Letter to C.W. 6.1.1784. as published in J.A.O.S. Vol. 10. p.111.
3. Letter to C.W. Op.cit.
4. Letter to C.W. Op.cit

is supposed to have sparked off the research, which ultimately led to the discovery of comparative and historical philology.[1]

It is easy to read too much into this passage when taken out of context. Before we explain its significance, it should be remembered that philology, as we have seen had already made considerable progress, and that Jones was not the first to discover the resemblances between Sanskrit and Latin and Greek. The affinity was noticed as early as the sixteenth century; Thomas Stephens,[2] an English Jesuit in India, in 1583 and Fillipo Sassetti,[3] an Italian merchant in Goa, in 1585 discovered independently the affinity between Sanskrit and European classical languages. In respect of the reason for this affinity, Jones was not the pioneer in the field. He only added to Boxhorn's "Scythian" family of

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1. On the Hindus AS.R. Vol. I. pp. 422-23. In a recent work the year 1786 is considered as the starting point and modern comparative philology. ~~Housdevan~~ Hobsbawm, E.J. Age of Revolutions p.286
2. "Many are the languages of these places. Their pronunciation is not disagreeable and their structure is allied to Greek and Latin". Fr. Thomas Stephens to his father 24.10.1583 as published in The Christian Purana of Father Thomas Stephens of the Society of Jesus. p. xxxvi.
3. "All their sciences are written in a language called Sanscruta which seems well articulated; of which there is no remembrance when it was spoken, for being so ancient they learn it as we do Greek and Latin ... and our language of today has a lot in common with it because in it we can find many of our nouns especially numbers: the 6,7,8, and 9, God, serpent and many others". Fillipo Sassetti to Bernado Davaurati n.d. Lettre de F. Sassetti p.341. Elsewhere Sassetti showed a remarkable insight into Sanskrit phonetics. F.S. to ~~Pico letter~~ Piero Vettari 27.1.1585 op.cit. p.283.

languages. Again, Coeurdoux, a Jesuit missionary of Pondicherry, made a remarkable observation nearly twenty years before Jones famous ~~Hitetoger~~philologer's passage. In 1768 he thought that "this resemblance of terms cannot be attributed it seems but to one of six causes: commerce, sciences, vicinity of the countries, religion, domination and common origin or to all these causes together".[1] After long consideration he decided that common origin would be the most likely explanation of the resemblance. Being true to his faith, the Jesuit fitted the discovery into the old Biblical tradition. "The languages were mixed up at the Babel tower. But was this confusion so complete that a few common words did not remain in all new languages? ... Many common terms remained in the new languages; others have been so disfigured with the lapse of time that they are no longer recognizable. A few have been saved from the shipwreck to serve as an eternal memorial to mankind of their common origin and ancient brotherhood ... Japhet the eldest son Noah left the places of Sennar taking with him one third of the human race, to the West. His seven children must have been without doubt chiefs of many great families each speaking one of the new original languages like Latin Greek and Slavonic etc. Let me be

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1. Mem. de l'Ac. des Inset de B.&L.Tom 49. p.660.

permitted to add the Sanskrit".[1]

The missionary made a clear distinction between all the human languages which were of common origin before the episode in the Tower of Babel and the languages of the family of Japhet. To prove the similarities between Sanskrit and the classical languages Coeurdoux gave a long list of words and verbal roots. He would have received recognition for adding Sanskrit to the Boxhorn's family of languages had he published his letter of 1768.[2]

Jones must be credited with independently discovering the resemblance between Sanskrit and Latin and Greek and with postulating the possibility of a common mother language. He had, no doubt, that uncommon talent for grasping the problems of linguistics without going into details. He should also be credited for making his theory public at a time when the European mind was moving away from the neo-classical eighteenth century.[3] This movement is often described as a revolt

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1. ~~Op.cit. p.664~~. Mem de l'Ac. des I. et de B.L. Tom. 49. p. 664
2. It was first published by Anquetil Duperron in 1808. See Bréal. Grammarie Comparée pp. xvi-xviii.
3. The news of this discovery, like many others, reached Europe long before the first volume of the Asiatick Researches was published. He wrote to his friend, "I find Sanskrit to be a sister of Latin and even the word Lavinia which is old Hetrusian signifies in Sanskrit what if Lady Spencer had not more valuable qualities to, boast of, would be flattered; but I may whisper to you that it means with a fine complextion". Letter to George John 29.9.1786. Spencer papers. The Irish were fascinated to know that their old language was a sister of Sanskrit and the news spread. J.C. Walker of the Irish Academy wrote to the Earl of Charlemont telling him how Jones wanted to compare the ancient traditions of Irish history with those of India, for Sanskrit had certainly an affinity with the ancient language of Ireland. J.C.W. to the Earl of Charlemont 5.5.1788 H.M.C.R.13 App.VIII. Vol. II p.75.

against the Age of Reason and is known under the general term of Romanticism. The idea that the Europeans migrated from a distant and unknown land soon fired the imagination of the Romantic mind.[1] Significantly it was a high priest of the Romantic Movement, Friedrick von Schlegel, who coined the term "Comparative grammar".

This fascination for the distant past was generally neglected by the historiography of the Enlightenment. Jones, as we have already noticed, was firmly grounded in the eighteenth century, with its Whig philosophy, classical education and cult of reason. His historical ideas were similar to those of the philosophers of the Enlightenment.[2] A first indication of a new trend in Jones's historical ideas are to be found in the memorandum which he wrote during his journey to India. Here for the first time he showed his interest in such problems as the confirmation of the tradition of the Deluge and the early history of the Indians.[3] Perhaps the study of the Gentoo Laws, which starts with the Hindu idea of creation, stimulated his interest in comparing the Hindu mythology with the Biblical tradition.[4]

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1. For the impact of the Romantic Movement on historiography and comparative philology see Collingwood, R.G. The idea of History pp. 87-112 and Neff, E. The poetry of History pp.93-115
2. Supra pp. 57-58
3. Supra pp. 125-126.
4. Though Jones declined to write a review of Halhead's work (See Letter to R. Griffiths, Saturday May 1777. Bodl.28480 cf. supra he must have started learning Indian law in 1778 when he hoped to obtain the judgeship in India; by 1782 he was being consulted as an Expert - Letter to E.Burke 17.3.1782. Burke papers. Wentworth Muniments. Sheffield.

Though Bacon had shown that fallen man may improve his lot through scientific research, and Newton had finally replaced Aristotle in natural sciences, still the Creator had a great role to play in the Newtonian universe.[1] The accepted chronology still started at 4004 B.C. Some thought that the history of the human race started before that date, and that the Creation occurred at an earlier age; but they had no geological or historical evidence to support their theory.[2] Such fossils as were found were conveniently ascribed to the ante-deluvian period. While Jones was reading his annual Discourses James Hutton was already working on geology, but was yet to bring out the results of his research.[3]

With this limited knowledge of the world and its history, and within a short space of time, Jones set about to write a short comprehensive history of "the ancient world". This was to be a critique of Bryant's work on comparative mythology.[4] The discourse on the Hindus was part of a series of short dissertations "inconnected in their titles and subjects, but all tending to a common point of no small importance in the pursuit of interesting truths."[5] These

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1. Butterfield, H. Origins of Modern Science pp. 84-85.
2. Neff, E. The poetry of history p.13.
3. Hutton published his work Theory of the earth, which is considered to be the first scientific work on geology, in 1795. See Gillispie, C.C. Genesis and geology pp. 40-72.
4. On the Hindus As.R. Vol. I. pp. 416-17.
5. ~~On the Hindus As.~~R. Vol. I. p.415.
   Op.cit.

"interesting truths" were the Creation, the Deluge and the migration of human races. He rejected Bryant's methods which put too much emphasis on etymology in the study of "ancient history".[1] He decided to judge the affinities and diversities among the human races according to their "languages and letters; philosophy and religion; remains of old sculptures and architecture and memoirs of their sciences and arts".[2] So language was but one method of making a comparative study of the human race. Thus the famous philologer's passage was an integral part of Jones's master plan to write a history of mankind. The Greeks not only spoke a similar language but they also worshipped the same gods,[3] their philosophy had much in common with that of the Hindus[4] and their alphabet sprang from the same origin.[5] Jones held that at the time of Muhammad there were five nations in Asia, the Hindus, the Arabs, the Persians, the Tartars and the Chinese. He wrote five dissertations, each dealing with one of those nations. His eighth discourse was on the Borderers, Mountaineers and Islanders of Asia.[6] With a very superficial

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1. ~~Op.cit. pp. 416-417.~~ On the Hindus. As.R. Vol. I. pp. 416-417
2. Op.cit. p. 421.
3. Op.cit. p. 424.
4. Op.cit. p. 425.
5. Op.cit. pp. 423-424.
6. As R. Vol. III pp. 1-16.

knowledge of the Chinese, early Persia and the Egyptians and a definite faith in the Book of Genesis, Jones made a bold attempt to draw conclusions from his researches in his discourse, On the Origins and families of Nations. He maintained that some of his conclusions are certain: (a) "The first race of Persians and Indians, to whom we may add the Romans and Greeks, the Goths and the old Egyptians or the Ethiops originally spoke the same language and professed the same popular faith" and b) "the Jews and Arabs, the Assyrians or second Persian race, the people who spoke Syriack and a numerous tribe of Abyssinians use one primitive dialect wholly distinct from the idiom just mentioned."[1] He thought that it was no more than highly probable that the "settlers in China and Japan had a common origin with the Hindus" and that "all the Tartars as they are inaccurately called were primarily of a third separate branch totally differing from the two others in language, manners and features".[2]

Once he had reduced the number of original races he had to find out their original home. He agreed with Linnaeus, the most advanced botanist of the age, that in the beginning

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1. ~~Op.cit. p.479.~~ As. R. Vol. III . p. 479.
2. Op.cit. p.480.

God created one pair of humans only. He found that one pair was sufficient to populate the whole earth as the numbers increased in geometrical progression.[1] The story of the Flood was true, confirmation of the historicity of Moses was to be found in the Purāṇas and the Vedas "which stand next in antiquity to the five books of Moses".[2] After the flood the language of Noah was lost irretrievably and his family settled in Iran, whence they migrated in all directions. The sons of Ham were the ancestors of the Hindus (by which Jones meant Indo-Europeans); to prove his hypothesis he identified Cush of Moses with Kuśa of Vālmīka.[3] Thus he found nothing in Hindu mythology which contradicted the Mosaic story.[4]

So Jones had but an indirect influence on the growth of the science of comparative philology. Philology had made definite progress by the end of the eighteenth century and the affinity of Sanskrit with the Greek and Roman languages had already been noticed. Jones arrived at the right theory

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1. As. R. Vol. III p.480.
2. Op.cit. p.484.
3. Op.cit. pp. 485-486, 490-491.
4. We shall discuss this in further detail later when we review Jones's chronology of the Hindus See Infra. p.188.) Jones maintained that the sons of Japhat went to Europe first, but ~~time~~ they were uncivilised Tartars, who were later overrun by ~~a~~ later migrants ~~from~~ the descendents of Ham. As. R. Vol. III pp. 490-491.

independently, but he was not the first to do so. He put the idea of common origin in a dramatic and fascinating way, which easily captured the post-Revolutionary European mind and stimulated further research on the subject. Finally Franz Bopp published the first comparative grammar of Indo-European language in 1816.[1] Jones should also be given credit for rather infectiously spreading the interest in Sanskrit throughout Europe and thus making it easy for Bopp to study Pāṇini, without whose ideas of morphology, modern philology would never have been possible.

Perhaps a minor but a very practical contribution to the study of Sanskrit linguistics was his paper on the Asiatick Orthography.[2] It may be that his transliteration was made with too many accents and he did not standardise his long vowels; but his principle, to follow the spelling letter for letter, is still being used. As Sir Monier Williams pointed out: "As a result of a kind of natural selection or

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1. It is interesting to note that it was Alexander Hamilton, a member of the Asiatick Society, who taught Schlegel the Sanskrit language in Paris when he was there as a prisoner of war.
2. A dissertation on the orthography of Asiatick words in Roman letters. As. R. Vol. I pp. 1-56. Jones also wrote a paper on the Affinity between the Hebrew and Devi Nagry characters. Transactions 19.5.1785. This was never published and the text is missing. It may be that much of what Jones said in this paper was incorporated in his discourse on the Hindus. See As. R. Vol. I pp. 423-424.

survival of the fittest the practice of all Oriental scholars so far as Aryan languages concerned is settling down into an acceptance of Sir William Jones's principle of transliteration."[1] This is a remarkable achievement if we remember that such a sound observation of Sanskrit phonetics was made before Jones embarked on the difficult task of learning the Language of the Gods.

II History: The Confrontation of the Hindu Gods and Heroes.

It is no easy task to reconstruct early Indian history solely from the mass of Indian mythology, with its innumerable Gods and Heroes, its conception of infinite time and contradictory commentaries on the original works. To this already difficult task Jones added another one. His study of Indian mythology had a purpose, other than the mere satisfaction of the curiosity of a few men. Such research might be "of solid importance in an age when some intelligent and virtuous persons are inclined to doubt the authenticity of the accounts delivered by Moses concerning the primitive world."[2] Universal history had to be written and Indian mythology explained in order to remove such doubts. So

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1. Monier Williams, Sir Monier. The duty of English speaking Orientalists J.R.A.S. 1790 pp. 607-638.
2. On the Gods As.R. Vol. I. p.225.

Jones was not making a survey for its own sake but to put Indian mythology in line with Biblical tradition. Once his conjectures about the Creation, the Deluge and migration of human races were moulded according to the story of Genesis Indian history had to be fitted into the framework of chronology based on the creation of the world in 4004 B.C.

From the Renaissance onwards one of the preoccupations of the Europeans was to explain classical mythology, and by the seventeenth century Europe had added to the classical pantheon many more Gods from all quarters of the world. Many theologians, both Protestant and Catholic, explained the Gods as embodiments of demons or fallen angels and the myths as corruption of sacred history. Bacon thought that most mythology was allegorical, pure metaphysics told in the form of stories. Newton took an Euhemeristic attitude. To him all myths were the results of the deification of the old heroes. There were many works written on mythology and Newton himself tried to reconstruct the ancient chronology of the Greeks, to dispell darkness and honour God.[1]

Jones rejected the pure allegoricism of Bacon and the pure Euhemericism of Newton. He recognised four sources of mythology, a) Historical, the "truth perverted into fable

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1. Newton, I. The chronology of ancient kingdoms, pp. viii-ix cf. Manuel, F.E. The eighteenth century confronts the Gods, pp. 6-9

ignorance, imagination, flattery, or stupidity". Thus the story of Noah and his flood was known to most ancient peoples, though in a fabulous form. b) Admiration for Nature: The wild admiration for nature led to the worship of sun and other constellations and helped the Hindus to invent "demi-gods and heroes to fill the vacant niches in their extravagant and imaginary periods". c) The magic of poetry: "Numberless divinities have been created solely by the magick of poetry; whose essential business it is, to personify the most abstract notions, and to place a nymph or a genius in every grove and almost in every flower; hence Hygieia and Jaso, health and remedy, are the poetical daughters of Aesculapius, who was either a distinguished physician, or medical skill personified". d) Metaphors: "Allegories of moralists and metaphysics have been also very fertile in deities".[1] Thus the Indian Vedäntic conception of Māyā was personified as the mother of universal nature and of all the inferior Gods.

With these four sources in mind Jones analysed the Hindu pantheon and compared it with the classical one. He came to the conclusion that they all worshipped the same gods under different names. "We must not be surprised," he said, "at finding all the pagan deities male and female melt into each other and at least into one or two".[2] So Gaṇeśa of the

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1. As. R. Vol. I, pp. 222 - 223.

2. Op. cit. p. 267.

Hindus was no other than Janus of the Greeks; Ceres, Lakṣmī; and Jupiter the Hindu triad. This pursuit of "comparative mythology" led him to discover what he thought the confirmation of "true history" in a distorted form in the pagan mythologies. He thought that Saturn of the Greeks should be identified with Noah, for the stories about him are very similar to those of Genesis.[1] Likewise the story about the Matsya Avatāra which Jones found in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is evidently "that of Noah disguised by Asiatick fiction" (to Jones the Biblical tradition was neither "Asiatick" nor fictional). So Manu "the child of the sun", who was saved by God during the universal deluge, was Noah of the Bible.[2] So Jones concluded that the Deluge is very important from the point of view of the historians for from this event genuine Hindu chronology begins. He rejected the other deluge mentioned in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa as a local one "intended only to affect the people of Vraja".[3]

Jones divided the whole of human history into four periods, Diluvian, Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Prophetical.[4] The Indian Satyayuga roughly corresponds with the Diluvian

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1. As.R. Vol. I. pp. 228-229.
2. Op.cit. p.230.
3. Op.cit. pp.234-235.
4. Op.cit. pp.236-237.

period and the stories of the first three Avatāras or incarnations of God refer to the story of the flood in allegories. As the fourth and fifth Avataras God punishes and humiliates presumptious monarchs. This again probably tells the story of Nimrod and Belus of the Old Testament.[1] He conjectured that the three Rāmas who were incarnations of God should be taken as one person and he was perhaps Rama, son of Cush of the Bible. Rāma in India "was named Caushalya, which as a derivative of Cushala", and the name Cush "is preserved entire in that of his son and successor and shadowed in that of his ancestor Vicuchi".[2] So Jones concluded "that government was first established, laws enacted and agriculture encouraged in India by Rama about theee thousand eight hundred years ago (2029 B.C.) and this fact agreed "with the received account of Noahs death and the previous settlement of his immediate descendants".[3]

In the reconstruction of Hindu chronology Jones depended largely on the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. John Shore supplied him with another work called Purāṇārthaprakāśam.[4] This later work was by Pandit Radhakanta who summarised the king lists from the various Paurāṇic sources. This was

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1. As.R. Vol. II. pp. 131-132.
2. Op.cit. p.132.
3. Op.cit.
4. A copy of this is now at the British Museum. See B.M. Or. Or. 1124. The king list is given in ff. 32-41.

the first attempt to put the dynasties of the Kaliyuga or the modern age, (which according to the tradition started in 3102 B.C.) into a systematic order. Jones met Radhakanta in summer 1787, and held long discussions with him.[1] Govardhana Kaul, a Kashmiri Brahmin, and Pandit Ramlochan, Jones's own teacher, also helped him to reconstruct early Indian history.[2] Jones's chief aim was to reduce the Indian Ages to within the limits of his historical period. To do this he had to prove that the Kaliyuga started much later than the Hindus would admit.

He found that the Hindu tradition regarding the date of the birth of the Buddha, the ninth incarnation of God is contradictory. Some said he was born at the beginning of the Kaliyuga while others maintained that he appeared at least 1000 years later. Jones also noticed that although the Brahmins spoke of the Buddha as an incarnation of God they disliked the Bauddhas, the followers of the Buddha. To reconcile the contradictions Jones postulated that there were two Buddhas. One was born at the end of the last Age and the other 1000 years after the start of the Kaliyuga.[3] The Chinese had left more reliable traditions about the birth

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1. Letters to John Shore. 25.3.1787. 11.5.1787 and 12.5.1787 as published in Shore, J. Memoirs pp. 289-292.
2. As R. Vol. II pp.121-122 and 124.
3. Op.cit. pp.121-122.

of the Buddha. Among the Jesuit accounts of the Fo or the Buddha, that of Joseph de Ghignes appeared to be most reliable. He put the date of the Buddha in 1027 B.C.[1] Hence Jones held that even if Fo is identified with the second Buddha, the Kaliyuga could not have started much before 2000 B.C. So the Hindus are wrong in assuming that the Kaliyuga started as early as 3102 B.C. If the Kaliyuga started at a later date, then the Hindus would agree that the other ages were mostly mythological, though they might contain some historical truth in the form of fables. The king-list, which ended in 452 B.C. with Candrabhija, who was the last king of the Andhras to rule independently in Magadha, was unreliable for it gave 3150 years to 142 reigns. Taking the date of the Buddha as 1027 B.C. and believing in the statement in Bhāgavatāmṛta (a commentary on the Bhāgavata Purāṇa) that the Buddha appeared in Avanti two years after Pradyota's accession to the throne, Jones reconstructed the Indian chronology as follows:-

Abhimanyu	2029 B.C.
Pradyota	1029 B.C.
Buddha	1027 B.C.
Nanda	699 B.C.

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1. As. R. Vol. II. p.125.

Balin	149 B.C.
Vikramaditya	56 B.C.
Devapāla	23 B.C.[1]

The last two names were from the Vikrama tradition as it was known to the Pandits and from the Monghyr land grant inscription. The date of Devapāla was decided to be 23 B.C. for both Jones and Wilkins took the term Saṃvat for Vikrama era. Jones knew that Saṃvat could also just mean year, "This date therefore might only mean the thirty third year of the king's reign; but since Vicramaditya was surnamed the foe of Saca, and is praised by that name in a preceeding stanza, we may safely infer that the grant was dated thirty three years after the death of that illustrious emperor, whom the king of Gaur, though a sovereign prince acknowledged as lord paramount of India".[2] Later he added two more names to the chronology. One was Nārayaṇapāla of the Badal inscription, whose date he fixed at 67 A.D. The other was Śaka who according to tradition died in 78 A.D.

On June 17th 1790 he read a paper, "A supplement to the essay on Indian chronology".[3] He had received a copy of Sūrya Siddhānta from his friend Samuel Davis. After a

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As. R. Vol II

1. ~~Op. cit~~. p.144.
2. As. R. Vol. 1. p.142.
3. Transactions 17.6.1790 cf. As.R. Vol. II. pp.389-403.

tedious effort he was able to read the work with the help of his teacher. From Newton's calculations he found the position of the Equinox at the time of the birth of Varāha (i.e. the astronomer Varāhamihira) who lived 1680 years after Parāśara. So Jones put the date of Parāśara in 1181 B.C. Thus Vāsiṣṭha, the grandfather of Parāśara and preceptor of Rāma, who was mentioned by Manu, could not have lived much before 1300 B.C. So Hindu history started much later than the Hindus would have had him believe. Jones confidently concluded, "Whatever the comparative antiquity of the Hindu scriptures, we may safely conclude that the Mosaick and Indian chronologies are perfectly consistent; that Manu son of Brahma was the Adima, or first created mortal, and consequently our Adam; that Manu, child of the sun, was preserved with seven others, in a bahitra or capacious ark from our universal deluge, and must therefore be our Noah; ... and the dawn of true Indian history appears only three or four centuries before the Christian era, the preceeding ages are clouded by allegory or fable."[1]

This chronology is no guide to Indian history. Jones used so-called etymology and astronomy in reconstructing the chronology although he censured Newton and Bryant for doing

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1. As. R. Vol. II. p.401.

likewise. This led him to fix the dates with unreliable calculations and identify names on their superficial resemblance. He relied solely on Paurāṇic sources and ignored the Vedas[1] completely and in spite of repeated statements to the contrary he believed in the Genesis rather blindly. So naturally his chronology is totally useless. But one cannot help admiring the laborious efforts of Pandit Radhakanta and Jones in bringing together all the king lists from various sources. Moreover Jones's efforts shifted the scholarly interest to the "dark periods" of Indian history which stimulated further research.

If chronology and geography are two important factors in the study of history of a given country, then neither Genesis nor the Paurāṇic tradition are any guide to early Indian history. The starting point of Indian chronology and ancient geography would be through the process of synchronism and identification. One could determine the name and date of an Indian prince for certain if he could be identified with someone mentioned in comparatively reliable classical sources about India and if other historical events synchronised with the given date.

In the history of Alexander's invasion of India the

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1. After obtaining the Vedic manuscripts Anthony Polier sent them to Jones. See A.P. to Joseph Banks. 20.5.1789. B.M. 5245 ff. 1-4.

classical sources mentioned an Indian prince called Sandrocottas who was an adventurer and who ruled in the land of Prasii, whose capital was Palibothra. Many European authors had tried to identify Sandrocottas with one or other Indian prince mentioned in the Indian traditions. Dow in his History of Hindustan identified him with Sinsarchund a Hindu king, who according to Firishta ruled in Kanauj.[1] The garbled version of the late medieval Hindu traditions as preserved by Firishta was no guide to Indian history. But Rennel in 1783 maintained that Palibothra the capital of Sandrocottas's kingdom should be identified with Kanauj. Like Palibothra, Kanauj stood at the confluence of two rivers; moreover the latitude of Kanauj was 27° which is what Ptolemy gave to Palibothra.[2] But contrary to his own conclusion Rennel found that Pliny's itinery put Palibothra very near the modern city of Patna, as there was no other proof that that there was an ancient city near Patna Rennel preferred Kanauj as the capital of early India.[3] In 1788 however he changed his view. He discovered that the local tradition in Patna maintained that there had been an old city called "Patelpoot-her (Pataliputra according to Sir William Jones)", in the

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1. Dow, A. History of Hindustan, Vol. I. p.10.
2. Rennel, J. Memoirs of a map of Hindoostan (1783) pp.40-41.
3. Op.cit. p.40.

same place, "and that the river Soane whose confluence with the Ganges is now at Moneal 22 miles above Patna once joined it under the walls of Pateelpoot-her".[1]

The French geographer d'Anville who wrote the first ancient geography of India as it could be reconstructed from classical sources identified Palibothra with modern Allahabad which was known as Prayaga and which stands at the confluence of the Ganges and Jamuna.[2] Robertson one of the three great British historians of the time agreed with d'Anville and thought that Rennel was wrong.[3]

In 1769 Maridas Pillai (Poullé) chief interpreter to the Supreme Council of Pondicherry sent a French translation of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa to M. Bertin minister and secretary of state. In 1772 Joseph de Guignes wrote a note on the work Bagavadam.[4] Maridas Pillai must have translated the work very loosely and his transcription of Sanskrit names shows that he pronounced them in the Tamil manner.[5] In the Paurāṇic king list the name of Candragupta appeared as Sandragouten. This helped de Guignes to recognise Sandragouten of the Bagavadam as the Sandrocottas of the classical sources.[6]

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1. Rennel, J. Memoirs etc. (1788) p.54.
2. d'Anville, J.B. Antiquité géographique de l'Inde" pp.51-57.
3. Robertson, W. An historical disquisition. pp. 30-31.
4. Réflections sur un livre Indien etc. Hist. et Mem. de l'Acad. de Ins. et B.L. Tom.38 pp.312-336.
5. I am grateful to Prof. Basham for pointing this out to me.
6. ~~Op.cit. pp.321-322.~~ Hist. et Mem. de la. Tom. 38. pp. 321-322

Working from the date of Alexander's invasion which he took as 328 B.C., de Guignes came to the conclusion that Sandragouten succeeded to the throne in 303 B.C.[1] This date he thought sychronised with the Pauranic king list if the date of Paricchiton (Parikṣit) is given as 1051 B.C., which date he reached by working backwards from the Ghaznavid invasion in 975 A.D.[2] In the ninth annual Discourse delivered in 1792 Jones has given his conclusions on universal history and "the origin of the families of nations", and on 28 February of the following year in his tenth annual discourse on Asiatick History[3] he gave his views on the methods and the use of history. He said that in Asia fiction and history are so blended "as to be scarce distinguishable";[4] so here historians have to work from mythology, tales and even dramas for they contain some historical events such as the murder of Nanda and the usurpation of Candragupta. But to reconstruct the history from the earliest period to the British conquest one must be competent in Sanskrit Persian and Arabic and should ask for explanations of the sources from the Brahmin pundits and the Indo-Muslim scholars like Ghulam Hus$^{s}_{\wedge}$in.[5]

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1. ~~Op.cit. p.323.~~ ~~Hist. et~~ Mem. de l'Ac. des Ins. et B. L. Tom. 38 p.323.
2. Op.cit. It is noteworthy the de Guignes's date for the accession of Parikṣit after the Mahābhārata war was different only by 100 years from that of Raychaudhuri which is widely accepted today. P.H.A.I. p.36.
3. As.R. Vol. IV. pp.1-15 and Transactions 28.2.1793.
4. Op.cit. p.7.
5. ~~As.R. Vol. IV. p.~~ Op. cit.

Even after the laborious work of consulting all the sources and scholars a historian could give "absolute credence to the general outline"[1] only.

Such a general outline ~~he~~ had already given in his other discourses and papers on Hindu chronology and mythology. He had established the "true facts" of Indian history within the long period from Rāma (that is the first establishment of an Indian epic) to Candrabhija (who is supposed to be the first Hindu king to rule in Bihar). One of these was the date of Parāsara and so the Mahābhārata which could not have been before the 12th century B.C. and the other was the date of Vikramāditya in 57 B.C. Now he believed that he could provide a third fact within a certain date.[2] This was the accession of Candragupta to the throne in Pātaliputra.

He said that he had already discovered by accident that the river Son had an old name Hiranyabahu (Hiranyavāha) which the Greeks called Eranoboas. At the confluence of this and the Ganges stood the old city of Pāṭaliputra which was no other than Palibothra of the Greeks.[3] Here he totally ignored Rennel's contribution. We have already noticed that in 1788 Rennel had fixed upon Patna or Pāṭaliputra as the old

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1. ~~Op.cit.~~ As. R. Vol IV p. 7.
2. Op.cit., p.6. By now Jones had realised that his early reconstruction of the Hindu chronology was useless.
3. As. R. Vol. IV. p.10-11.

capital of ancient India, and he cited Jones's authority for it.[1] But we do not know whether Rennel only got Jones to correct the spelling or received the information about Pāṭaliputra from him. Jones knew in 1788 that Patna was once called Pāṭaliputra and in 1793 he had new evidence to establish this fact.

This led to another discovery; "Chandragupta who was a military adventurer, became like Sandrocottas the sovereign of upper Hindustan, actually fixed the seat of his empire at Pataliputra, where he received ambassadors from foreign princes and was no other than that very Sandrocottas who conducted a treaty with Seleucus Nicotor".[2] Jones already knew from the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and Purāṇārthprokāsam[3] about this adventurer prince of India. But previously his efforts had been devoted to proving that in fact the chronology of Hindu India was much shorter than the Hindus themselves claimed and he paid no attention to the history of Candragupta. But recently Candragupta had again been brought to his notice by two sources, one of which was the well-known Kathāsaritsāgara of Somadeva and the other an eighteenth century drama Candrābhiṣekha[4] written by Banesvara

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1. Supra. p. 190.
2. As.R.Vol. IV. p.11.
3. Supra p. 184.
4. I.O.L. Or. ~~[illegible]~~ W. 52. cf. ~~Turney~~ Tawney and Thomas Cat. of Two Collections p.53.

Bhattacarya; the Maharaja of Burdwan, Citrasena was the patron of this poet who had already written a romance called Citracampu[1]. The play, which was produced at the Raja's court, was in seven acts and told the old story of the intrigues of Cānakya and Śakaṭāra in overthrowing the Nandas and establishing Candragupta Maurya on the throne. It is quite clear that Banesvara drew heavily on the legends especially the Brhatkathā tradition as he introduced Śakāṭara as the chief instigator of the palace revolution.[2] Jones clearly saw that the name had been mispronounced by the Greeks and that the career of this prince fitted in well with the classical accounts of Sandrocottas.

Here again Jones made no mention of de Guignes. He must have been well acquainted with the other works of de Guignes as he had used his date for the birth of the Buddha in reconstructing the Hindu chronology.[3] But there is no evidence that the relevant copy of the journal, in which the article appeared, was available in Calcutta at that time. Even if Jones had read the article, while in England, he would not have been interested enough to remember the details of the article twenty years later. Moreover the whole

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1. Eggeling, J. Cat. of the Sanskrit Mss. Vol. VI. 939a
2. Sastri, K.N. Age of Nandas and Mauryas p.147. cf. I.O.L. Or. W. 52 ff 68-82
3. Supra. p. 186.

business of the Bagavadam was shrouded in mystery that it was not considered to be a reliable source.[1] Joseph de Guignes was recognised only as an expert on China and so his contribution to Indian chronology was neglected not only by Jones but even by the French geographer D'Anville. None of the other authors who dealt with Sandrocattos and Palibothra made any mention of de Guignes. So it is possible that Jones came to the same conclusion independently.

While his earlier chronology is a useless guide to ancient Indian history, this identification was an epoch making discovery. At this period Indian archaeology had hardly started. No doubt a good number of inscriptions had been discovered[2] and Wilkins had successfully deciphered the Gupta Brāhmī.[3] Old coins had been discovered in ~~Nellore~~ Nelore and in Bengal.[4] Indian sculpture and architecture had already attracted European notice;[5] William Hodges[6] made a case for Indian architecture; and Chambers made a through report of the ruins of Mavālipuram.[7] But such discoveries were as yet no help in reconstructing Indian history. We have seen

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1. M.R. Vol. 79. p.593.
2. As.R. Vol. 1. pp.123-170, and 276-287,357-388, and 379-382.
3. As.R. Vol. II pp.167-170.
4. Op.cit. pp.331-332 and Allan, J. Cat. of the coins of Gupta dynasties pp. xi, xii.
5. Archaeologia Vols. VII and VIII.
6. Hodges, W. Travels in India pp. 64-76.
7. Chambers, W. Some account of the sculpture and ruins at Mavalipuram. As. R. Vol. 1. pp. 157 - 158.

that epigraphic evidence could not be of any use until much more ground had been covered, and little progress could be made without reference to Buddhist and Jain scriptures and to Chinese records.

The well known classical references, the Paurāṇic traditions and the few inscriptions known at the time could only lead to erroneous conclusions when studied without the many other sources then not known. The real contribution of Jones and his colleagues to modern historiography of early India was primarily to draw attention to this early period of history and secondly to evolve the foundation of a methodology which was to be improved upon any later scholars. Such methodology includes reading Brāhmī inscriptions, the study of the ruins and the identification of names and places and persons, like the identification of Palibothra and Sandrocottas. The methodology was summed up by William Chambers; he suggested that Indian history should be reconstructed by "comparing names, and great events recorded by them (Indians) with those interspersed in the memories of other nations and by calling in the assistance of ancient monuments coins, and inscriptions as occasion shall offer".[1]

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1. Chambers W. Some account of the sculpture and ruins at Mavalipuram. As.R. Vol. I. pp.157-158.

III The translation of Śakuntalā and the discovery of the ancient Indian civilisation

James Mill in his efforts to belittle the achievements of the Hindus took Jones as his chief antagonist; he tried to show how the Orientalist suffered from illusions about the Hindus and tended to magnify their importance without having any idea of what the term civilisation meant.[1] He said that Jones's description of the life of the Arabs and Hindus far surpassed the "rhapsodies of Rousseau on the happiness and virtue of savage life".[2] To Mill Jones was a misguided man, who failed to grasp the problems of India; his reason gave way to the romantic fascination of the East and so in his judgement on India he was uncritical. Ever since the first publication of Mill's first work in ~~1878~~ 1818 the history of the British policy in India had been presented as if it were a struggle between Jones and Mill, the romantic versus the rationalist. This theme was developed in a recent conference on Indian historiography.[3] Elsewhere[4] Jones is described as a medievalist. In fact most of these writers presented Jones as James Mill had depicted him even

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1. Mill, James. History of British India Vol. II. p.138.
2. Op.cit. pp.139-140.
3. Philips, C.H. Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon, pp.217-229.
4. Bearce, G.D. British attitudes towards India, pp.20-24.

though their sympathies may have been with him.

Jones's ideas were generally similar to those of the eighteenth century. He was brought up in an atmosphere of classical learning and his sympathies were with the men of reason. To him the real source of human happiness and prosperity was in commerce and labour. Politically he belonged to the extreme group of the Whig radicals yet in him there was a tendency to dislike the "Civilisation", to love the "primitive", ~~the~~ "~~Impoverished~~" and the "natural". This led him to admire the Arabs of Yemen where "true happiness" could still be found.[1] The singular tension between the decorous and stylish tradition of the eighteenth century and the romantic fascination of uncommon subjects,[2] which has been noticed in his poetry may also be traced in his other works, notably in his treatment of history, where the conflict between the historiography of the Enlightenment and that of the Romantic movement is much in evidence. He believed in a concise, periodised and stylistic history yet in India he turned his attention to the "darker" periods, in which he earlier showed little or no interest. This conflict between what we may call the man of reason and the

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1. Supra pp. 68-69.
2. Preface Sir William Jones's poems. selected by J.B.S. Carter.

man of instinct is also manifested in his attitude towards India. Mill and others have only mentioned one trend in Jones's thought.

In India he developed a passion for botany. He observed numerous Indian plants and tried to classify them according to the Linnaean system. But this study of botany was not merely to satisfy his curiosity but was stimulated by his deep religious feelings, "as to botany, it is my greatest delight in our vacations, partly because it is the most agreeable and interesting branch of natural history, but principally because it is the favourite amusement of my darling Anna, who will have the pleasure of showing your ladyship her botanical drawings of Indian plants, which we have examined together. Though we have read the works of the learned and eloquent Barrow with many other excellent theological discourses, yet we find a more exquisite lecture on the being and attributes of God in every flower every leaf and every berry than can be produced by the real wisdom and eloquence of man. The sublime doctrine of final causes nowhere so beautifully proved and illustrated as in the plants of the lakes and forests when their different parts and uses of them are minutely and attentively observed".[1]

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1. Letter to Lady Georgiana 24.10.1791. Spencer papers.

So nature is to be studied carefully and preserved; the animals brought to Jones for preservation had to be set free in the rocks and woods unless they could be tamed and protected.[1] He preferred to live away from the city and the crowd, "our way of life however is quite pastoral in this retired spot; as my prime favourites among all our pets are two large English sheep which came with us from Spithead and having narrowly escaped the knife are to live as long and as happily with us as they can; they follow us for bread and are perfectly domestic. We are literally lulled to sleep by Persian nightingales and cease to wonder that the bulbul with a thousand tales makes such a figure in Oriental poetry".[2] This was how he lived in Alipur five miles from the city centre. Here he used to spend his evenings reading Italian poetry with Anna Maria and weekends enjoying the life in natural surroundings.[3] In autumn he lived in Krishnagar at the heart of nature: "How preferable is this pastoral mansion (though built entirely of vegetable substances without glass, mortar, metal or any mineral except iron nails from its roof to its foundation) to the marble palaces which you have seen in Italy. It is a thatched cottage with an upper story

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1. Discourse of Asiatick History, civil and natural. As. R. Vol. IV. p.13.
2. Letter to Charles Chapman, 26.41784 as published in Shore, J. Memoirs p.247.
3. Letter to George John 22.7.1787 Spencer papers.

and a covered verome or veranda as they call it here all round well boarded and ten or twelve feet broad. It stands on a dry plain where many a garden flower grows wild".[1] There he spent most of his time with the Brahmins discussing literature, philosophy and mythology and telling them about the latest scientific discoveries in Europe.[2] His pleasure was the company of these men from Navadvip who called him a "Hindu of the military tribe".[3] He composed Sanskrit verses for the children of Krishnagar.[4] The life in this cottage was in fact idyllic and must have seemed to Jones like that of the golden age of fable, "I wish your ladyship could see us in our charming cottage; it would bring to your mind what the poets tell us of the golden age; for not to mention our flocks and herds that eat bread out of our hands you might see a kid and a tiger playing together at Anna's feet. The tiger is not so large as a full grown cat though he will be (as he is of the royal breed) as large as an ox, he is suckled by a she-goat and has all the gentleness (except when

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Letter to George John.

1. ~~W.J. to G.J.S.~~ 5.8.1787. Spencer papers.
2. Letters to Joseph Banks 25.2.1788 and 24.9.1788. D.T.C. Vol.6 ff. 19-20 and f.78.
3. Letter to George John 12.8.1787 Spencer papers.
4. "I had made a Sanskrit stanza signifying that as a thirsty antelope runs to a pool of sweet water so I thirst for all kinds of knowledge which is as sweet as nector. This verse has given me a place among the Hindu poets. The Raja copied it, his son got it by heart and the Brahmins entered it among their records". Letter to George John 12.8.1787.

he is hungry) of his foster mother".[1] This pastoral life reminds one of the hermitage of Kanva, the foster father of Śakuntalā heroine of Kālidāsa's famous drama. No doubt Jones was charmed by the simplicity of life in Kanva's aśrama (hermitage) where all living creatures, animals plants and human beings lived in peace and harmony.

He first came to know about Śakuntalā in the late summer of 1787. While in Europe he had heard about Indian Nāṭakas. Père Pons has described it as Brahminical history mixed with fables.[2] After his enquiries in Calcutta among the Brahmins Jones found out that Nāṭakas were not histories mixed with fables but were popular works which "consisted of conversations in prose and verse held before ancient Rajas in their publick assemblies".[3] So, he concluded that Nāṭakas were discourses on music and poetry. However Pandit Radhakanta told him that the Nāṭakas were like the English plays performed in Calcutta during the cool seasons. When Jones asked for the best specimen of such a play he was given Śakuntalā.[4] This must have been sometime in August 1787 for we find him sending the story of the drama to George John on

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1. Letter to Lady Georgiana 8.10.1787. Spencer Papers.
2. ~~Jones W.~~ Sacontala or the fatal ring p.1. cf. Père Pons to Père Halde 23.11.1740 Lettres édifiantes p.72.
3. Sacontala p.11.
4. Op.cit. pp.II-III.

4 September of the same year, "I must tell you the subject of a drama in Sankrit by Calidas(pronounce always as in Italian) the Indian Shakespeare or Matastasio who was the chief poet at the court of Vicramāditya near two thousand years ago. The dramatick piece which is neither tragedy nor comedy but like many of Shakespeare's fairy pieces is called Sacontala".[1] In a year's time he read the Bengali recension of the drama with the help of Ramlochar his teacher of the Vaidya caste and on 17 August 1788 he completed his translation of the drama first into Latin and then into English.[2] In 1789 the first English translation was published in Calcutta.[3]

This was not the first Sanskrit work to be translated in a European language. In the seventeenth century Abraham Roger had translated Bhartrihari's proverbs,[4] and Wilkins had already published Bhagvat Geeta in 1785 and Hitopadesa in 1787. But these works were chiefly intended to convey the Indian religious and secular ideas to Europe, and they were not translated for their literary merit. Neither Hastings nor Wilkins claimed that; in fact Hastings had to make a

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1. Letter to George John. 4.9.1787. Spencer papers.
2. Cat. of the Library of the late Sir William Jones. No 477.
3. Sacontala of the fatal ring; an Indian drama by Calidas translated from the original Sanskrit and Pracit Calcutta 1789. For the benefit of insolvent debtors.
4. Supra p. 18.

special plea for the Geeta, "I should exclude in estimating the merit of such a production all rules drawn from the ancient and modern literature of Europe".[1] Jones unlike Hastings did not make any special pleading for Indian literature. To him Kālidāsa could be judged by European standards and he was equal to Shakespeare both as a dramatist and as a poet. He agreed that taste varied but it was from individual to individual and not from one nation to another; "on the characters of the play I shall offer no critism; because I am convinced that the tastes of men differ as much as their sentiments and passions and that in feeling the beauties of art as in smelling flowers tasting fruits viewing prospects, and hearing melody, every individual must be guided by his own sensations and the incommunicable associations of his own ideas".[2]

So Jones gave only his individual judgement which might or might not be accepted by others. No doubt the simplicity of Śakuntalā, the love of nature in the play charmed Jones but he ascribed greatness to it more for its style and decorum. Such style was the result of a highly complex and cultivated civilisation, "Whatever the age when

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1. Wilkins, C. The Bhagvat Geeta p.7.
2. Sacontala pp. ix-x.

drama was first introduced in India, it was carried to great perfection in its kind, when Vicramāditya who reigned in the first century before Christ gave encouragement to poet philosophers, and mathematicians at a time when Britons were as unlettered and unpolished as the army of Hanumat:[1] nine men of genius commonly called the nine gems attended his court and were splendidly supported by his bounty, and Calidas is unanimously allowed to have been the brightest of them".[2] The drama with its complex use of mythology in allegorical form[3] was produced at a time when the "Indian empire" was in its full vigour and "the national vanity must have been highly flattered by the magnificent introduction of those kings and heroes in whom the Hindus gloried".[4] If Jones had been merely fascinated by primitiveness, he would have preferred the "unlettered Britons" to Kalidasa of Vikramāditya's court. He was charmed by the simplicity of Śakuntalā, the peacefulness of Kanva's Aśrama, yet he used the drama to prove that the Hindus had a civilisation in its own way equal to that of the Greeks. This is the reason why he purposely avoided passages like the one describing the

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1. Hanumān, a mythological figure, leader of the monkeys who helped Rāma in the rescue of his wife Sītā.
2. Op.cit. pp. iii, iv.
3. Op.cit. p. ix.
4. Op.cit. p.vii.

swelling breasts of Sakuntala. The sense of decency which earlier made him change the sex of the subject in his Persian Song manifested itself here.[1] He admitted that he had excluded from his translation passages of Gīta Govinda which he considered to be "too bold" or "too luxurient".[2] All this was to prove that the achievements of the Hindus were not much different from those of ancient Europe, "To what shall I compare my literary pursuits in India? Suppose Greek literature to be known in modern Greece only and there to be in the hands of priests and philosophers; and suppose them to be still worshippers of Jupiter and Apollo; suppose Greece to have been conquered successively by Goths, Hindus Vanduls, Tartars and lastly by the English; then suppose a court of judicature to be established by the British parliament in Athens and an inquisitive Englishman to be one of the judges; suppose him to learn Greek there which none of the countrymen knew and to read Homer Pindar, Plato, which no other Europeans had ever heard of. Such am I in this country; substituting Sanscrit for Greek and the Brahmins for the priests of Jupiter and Valimic Vyasa and Calidasa for Homer Plato and Pindar".[3]

This complex personality, the product of romaticism

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1. ~~Supra, p.~~ Pinto, V de Sola. Sir William Jones and English literature. B.S.O.A.S. Vol XI p. 687
2. On the mystical poetry, As. R. Vol. III. p.183.
3. Letter to George John 23.8.1787. Spencer papers.

on the one hand and a classical training on the other, found in India an echo of his own being — on the one hand simplicity, natural beauty and fascinating strangeness and on the other a highly complex and well cultivated civilisation.

He had shown that Indians and most Europeans sprang from the same origin; their languages were derived from an original extinct language; and the Hindus, Greeks and all pagans worshipped the same gods under different names. The similarities between early India and Greek astronomy was explained in the same vein, "the Indian division of the Zodiack was not borrowed from the Greeks or Arabs, but having been known in this country from time immemorial and being the same in part with that used by other nations of the old Hindu race was probably invented by the first progenitors of that race before their dispersion".[1] But the Indians also contributed to human civilisation after their settlement in India. He supplied new evidence to prove that the game of chess was discovered in India.[2] He supported the traditional story that Pythagoras and Plato borrowed their doctrines from India with fresh authority. The fountain source of all mystical philosophy was the Vedāntic system from which the

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1. On the antiquity of the Indian Zodiack, As. R. Vol. II. p.289.
2. On the Indian game of chess, Op.cit. p.159.

Persians and Greeks had borrowed. He always felt proud that he could converse with the Brahmins in their own language whereas the ancient Greeks could not communicate with them directly.[1]

The two aspects of Hinduism which attracted Jones most were the conception of the non-duality of God and the human soul as explained by Śaṅkara in his commentary on the Vedānta and the transmigration of the soul. Jones had faith in God and Christ as depicted in the Bible but his views were very similar to those of Dissenters such as Price and Priestly. Of Richard Price's sermon, he said, that "after this publication by good old Price, the Church of England as it is called would inevitably fall and the Religion of the Gospel be substituted in its place".[2] This sermon if translated into Persian and Sanskrit might convince the Muslims and the Hindus of the superiority of Christianity. In fact the Hindus would have less difficulty "in admitting the thirty nine articles; because if those articles were written in Sanskrit they might pass well enough for the composition of a Brahmin".[3] The Brahmins would not find it difficult to

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1. "Need I say what exquisite pleasure I receive from conversing easily with that class of men who conversed with Pythagoras Thales and Solom but with this advantage over the Grecian travellers that I had no need of an interpreter". Letter to George John 26.8.1787. Spencer Papers.
2. Letter to George John 26.8.1787. Spencer Papers.
3. Op.cit.

follow the Christian conception of one God. Of the Vedāntic system he said, "I have not sufficient evidence on the subject to profess a belief in the doctrine of the Vedanta, which human reason alone could perhaps, neither fully demonstrate nor fully disprove; but it is manifest, that nothing can be farther removed from impiety than a system wholly built on purest devotion".[1]

The multitude of the Hindus were superstitious they practised false religion, but Hinduism like other Asiatic religions contained germs of the true religion; "Our divine religion, the truth of which (if any history is true) is abundently proved by histrical evidence, has no need of such aids, as many are willing to give it, by asserting that the wisest men of this world, were ignorant of the two great maxims, that we must act in respect of others, as we should wish them to act in respect of ourselves, and that, instead of returning evil for evil we should confer benefits even on those who wish to injure us."[2] "These maxims were known to the Hindus three centuries before Christ to the Chinese and to Sadi and Hafiz. (~~St. Paul echoed the same view regarding the "spirit of the great one", as it is to be found in the Vedas~~).[3]

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1. On the philosophy of the Asiaticks As.R. Vol.IV.p.172.
2. Op.cit. p.174.
~~3. Op.cit. p.180.~~

In one respect Jones thought Hinduism was superior to Christianity. He could not believe in the Christian doctrine of punishment and eternity of pain.[1] He found that the Hindu idea of transmigration of soul "more rational than the Christian idea of the future state. I am no Hindu but I hold the doctrine of the Hindus concerning a future state to be incomparably more rational, more pious and more likely to deter men from vice than the horrid opinions inculcated by the Christians on punishment without end."[2]

But when all this was said about the greatness of the Hindu civilisation, beautiful literature, sublime religion and highly complex metaphysics, Jones did not go so far to say, as his opponents thought he did, that India was better than Europe. No doubt, he maintained that the Indians and the Arabs were more original in literature than the Romans had been, yet they were no better than the Greeks.[3] In fact to Jones

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1. Letter to George John. 2.9.1787. Spencer Papers.
2. Letter to George John. 4.9;1787.
3. "As to the works of Greeks I perfectly agree with you and think every line of them to be a gem of exquisite beauty but I consider the Romans as bright only with borrowed rays and doubt whether Italy would have produced a poet better (than) the Fauns and Sylvens in Greece had not been conquered. The Hindus and Arabs are perfectly original; and to my taste (which can no more be a rule for others than my smell) their compositions are sublime and beautiful in a high degree: but your favourite Virgil would make an indifferent appearance in a verbal translation; and the art of this compositions can only be known to those who like you feel the charm of his original versification." Letter to Robert Orme 12.10.1786. N.L.W.14005 B.C. This was written in reply to Robert Orme's claim that the Greek literature was superior to that of the Indians. "I am convinced that the Indian mythology can never furnish ideas of such

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Asia flourished in the sphere of imagination only whereas "reason and taste are the grand prerogatives of European minds".[1] This made Europeans superior to the Indians and other Asiatics; "though we cannot agree with the sage preceptor of that ambitious Prince (Alexander) that the Asiaticks are born to be slaves yet the Athenian poet seems perfectly in the right when he represents Europe as a sovereign princess and Asia as her handmaid".[2] Asia had no conception of freedom. If every reader of history "would open his eyes to some very important conclusions which flow from the whole extent of it, he could not but remark the constant effect of despotism in benumbing and destroying all those faculties which distinguish men from the herd, that grases; and to that cause he would inpute the decided inferiority of most Asiatick nations, ancient and modern to those in Europe who are blest with happier governments".[3] This was the reason why Hindu sciences like medicine and chemistry were inferior to those of Europe. To Jones the greatest achievements of human wisdom were embodied

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Footnote 3 continued from previous page

fine taste as the genius of the Greeks have improved or invented for theirs". R.O. to W.J. 11.3.1786. Orme collections 214.50 f.46.

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1. The Second Discourse As.R. Vol. I. p.407.
2. Op.cit. p.405
3. On Asiatick History, As.R. Vol. IV. pp.7-8.

in the British constitution. Significantly in the second plan of his proposed epic poem Britain discovered which was to be written in praise of the British constitution, gods and heroes from India came to pay homage at the nuptials of Britain (Royalty) and Albion (liberty).[1] The union of Royalty and liberty could only be found in the British constitution which made Britain far superior to any other nation in the world. This love for the British constitution and a sense of the superiority of Europe in the field of science and law, were dominant emotions in Jones's mind as were the romantic fascination which the exotic had for him.

We cannot judge Jones's contribution to the development of Indology by adding up various isolated discoveries supposed to have been made by him. Some of these discoveries had already been made independently of Jones while others like that on orthography were of very small importance. His real contribution to Indology lies in his attitude towards India and in his dramatic way of presenting his theories about Indian civilization. He infectiously spread the romantic fascination of India and her culture, which was to stimulate many scholars, Indian and European, to research in Indian studies. Thus the

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1. Britain Discovered as published as Shore, J. Memoirs pp. 475-489.

history, philosophy, religion, and ethnography of India were brought to light. His publication of Sacontala and Gita Govinda put Indian literature on the world map. After this no-one could deny its merits. Walpole might have disliked it,[1] but even Mill[2] had to admit that parts of the drama were beautiful.

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1. Horace Walpole to Robertson 20.6.1791. Correspondence Vol.15 pp.211-12.
2. Mill, J. History of British India, Vol. II. pp.56-57.

CHAPTER VII

The legacy of Jones.

In the autumn of 1793 Jones took Anna Maria to Bandel, a town near Calcutta. He had to cancel his annual trip to Krishnagar, for Anna Maria was suffering from a chronic stomach complaint because of the climate; this was causing anxiety to her doctors, and Jones was advised not to go very far from Calcutta. Since 1786[1] he had been persuading her to return to England, because of her ill health, and in 1793 she had at last agreed. He had almost completed compiling the *Digest*, so he thought his days in Calcutta were coming to an end. On 25 September he looked back upon his ten years in India: "This day ten years ago, my dear Lord, we landed at Calcutta, and if it had not been for the incessant ill health of my beloved Anna, they would have been the ten happiest years of a life always happy because always independent; her sufferings from this climate and consequently mine (though the climate has not affected me personally) [are] approaching I trust to their termination".[2]

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1. Letter to Warren Hastings. 23.10.1786. B.M.29.170.f.234.
2. Letter to George John 25.9.1793. Spencer papers.

Anna Maria would leave on 28 November and he would follow her as soon as he could complete his task of translating the Digest of Hindu and Muslim laws. He prepared to leave with some regret: "Having nothing to fear from India and much to enjoy in it, I shall make a great sacrifice whenever I leave it. I shall leave a country where we have no royal court, no House of Lords, no clergy with wealth or power, no taxes, no fear of robbers or fire, no snow and hard frost followed by comfortless thaws and no ice except what is made by art to supply our desserts, add to this, that I have twice as much money as I want, and am conscious of doing very great and extensive good to many millions of native Indians who look up to me not as their judge only, but as their legislator".[1]

This picture of his life in India was not realistic. He had many anxious moments when Anna Maria was ill; his own health was not as good as he made out. He had a serious attack of sunstroke in 1784 which reduced him to a skeleton, and from which he never quite recovered.[2] If Devis's picture is any guide, then the young man whom Sir Josuah Reynolds painted in 1769 had certainly lost his youth and

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1. ~~op.cit.~~, Letter to George John, 25.9.1793. Spencer papers.
2. Letter to Warren Hastings 7.1.1785. B.M.29.167.f.330.

was much emaciated. Ever since his illness, he followed Hastings's advice and avoided the Indian sun.[1]

There were other moments of doubt, when he was overworked at the Asiatick Society, or as in 1786 when the Judges of the Supreme Court were left unpaid for sometime, and he was compelled to borrow money.[2] But in spite of these anxious moments and doubts, the years in India were the happiest of Jones's life. He had all the material comforts he could ask for, a large salary, a garden house in Alipur, an estate in Krishnagar, and an entourage of servants and slaves. He had saved already more than £30,000, (though not quite in five or six years, as he originally thought he would[3]), the capital which was necessary to purchase a "Sabine farm" and live independently in England. He had his other pleasures, in exploring Oriental literature and organising the Asiatick Society. But he received the greatest satisfaction from compiling the laws of India: "I speak the language of the Gods, as the Brahmins call it, with great fluency, and am engaged in superintending a Digest of Indian law for the

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1. Anna Maria to Warren Hastings 1.2.1790.B.M.29.172 f.26.
2. "I hope none of your friends think of coming hither: our salaries are unpaid and we are forced to borrow money for our daily rice." Letter George Milles 22.2.1786.N.L.W. 67-9 670 C. cf. letter, John Macpherson,5.2.1766, as published in Shore, J.,Memoirs,p.269.
3. By 1791 he had saved £27,839, and he then hoped to send another £3,000 in a year's time.Letter to George John.20.2.91 Spencer papers.

benefit of twenty four millions of black British subjects in these provinces. The work is difficult and engages all my leisure, every morning between my breakfast and the sitting of the Court. The natives are charmed with the work, and the idea of making their slavery lighter, by giving them their own laws, is more flattering to me, than the thanks of the King, which have been transmitted to me".[1] To be the legislator of the Indians was his greatest desire in the last years of his life. This, he thought, would be his "legacy to India". In October 1793 it looked as though this was going to be the case.

II.

In England Jones had defined law as the collected will of the people, thus the state consisted of all those who live within it. The officers of the state should be chosen by the people. He found that his position in India was inconsistent with his theory of the state and law. But he soon reconciled his doctrine with the Indian situation. The doctrine was true in England but inapplicable in India, where the people should be ruled by absolute power.[2] The

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1. Letter to George John. 20.2.1791. Spencer papers.
2. "I perfectly agree, (and no man of sound intellect can disagree), that such a system is wholly inapplicable to this country, where millions of men are so wedded to inveterate prejudices and habits, if liberty could be forced upon them by Britain, it would make them as miserable as the cruelest despotism." Letter to "a friend in the Bar". 13.4.1784, as published in Shore, J. Memoirs, p.246.

Indians might have flourished in other fields, but they had not produced the best system of government. They preferred absolute rule to freedom: "The religious manners and laws of the natives preclude even the idea of political freedom".[1] It would be unworthy of the British Government to impose their system on the Indians for "a system forced upon a people invincibly attached to opposite habits, would in truth be a system of cruel tyranny".[2] So the Indians should be allowed to live according to their customs and laws. He expressed a similar view in respect of the Island of Johanna, his visit to which he always remembered, when he received news that the inhabitants were complaining against the treatment of the Company's officials, he advised that the islanders should ~~not~~ best be left alone.[3]

If the Indians were to be ruled according to this principle, then their laws should be codified in a manner which would make it easy for European judges to understand them. The codification of Indian laws and the reform of the British Court of Justice in India had been in his mind for some time.[4] He discussed it with his friends in England,[5]

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1. On The History of the Asiaticks, Civil and Natural, As.R., vol. IV, p.8.
2. "The best practical system of Indian Judicature" Burke notes. 9c. Wentworth muniments.
3. Letter to George John. 29.7.1787. Spencer papers.
4. Letter to Edmund Burke. 27.2.1784. Burke papers, Wentworth muniments.
5. Letter to Cornwallis 19.3.1788. B.M.29.171.

and in 1786 he intimated his friend John Rous his plans for codifying Indian laws, which he thought should follow Justinian methods. Rous was to use his influence with Pitt and Dundas to support Jones's plan.[1]

This idea was further developed in a letter to Cornwallis. In this Jones said that the British principles in India were to uphold the private laws of the inhabitants and "these laws should not be superceded by a new system of which they could have no knowledge and which they must have considered intolerant".[2] Such a policy, so Jones thought, was upheld in the Regulation Act of 1773. But there were many and considerable difficulties in putting this principle into practice. The laws were written in Arabic and Sanskrit and most Europeans could not be expected to learn the languages and they should not rely on Indian interpreters: "We can never be sure that we have not been deceived by them. It would be absurd and unjust to pass an indiscriminate censure on a considerable body of men; but my experience justifies me in declaring that I could not with an easy conscience concur in a decision, merely on the written opinion

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1. Letter to John Rous.24.10.1786. Camb.6958.
2. Letter to Cornwallis 19.3.1788. B.M.29.171.

of native lawyers, in any case, in which, they could have the remotest interest in misleading the court".[1]

The remedy was to compile the native laws in a Justinian fashion, by collecting the Law tracts and their commentaries together, and then translating them in the form of a digest of Indian law. Jones proposed to appoint two pandits and two Maulavis, representing the two Hindu and the two Muslim schools of jurisprudence, to bring together all the lawbooks of India and their commentaries. He thought that this would cost one thousand Sikka Rupees, and take three years to complete. Jones volunteered himself to spend some time each day in guiding the compilation and in translating it. The Governor General and Council intimated Jones's project to the Court of Directors.[2] The Council ~~Court~~ had already approved his plan and promised to provide the cost of it.[3]

If Jones thought that the Indians were to be ruled by their own laws to lighten the burden of foreign rule on them, he also thought that the purpose of Indian law was to protect the person and property of the individual. To Jones the happiness and prosperity of England largely

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1. Letter to Cornwallis. 19.3.1788. B.M. 29.171.
2. Bengal Public Letter. 6.11.1788.
3. Bengal Public Consultation. 19.3.1788.

depended on the happiness and prosperity of India. But India could not be prosperous unless the Indians were allowed to enjoy the "security of descendable property".[1] "Our nation in the name of the King has twenty three million black subjects in these two provinces, but nine tenths of their property are taken from them and it has even been publickly insisted that they have no landed property at all: if my Digest of Indian law should give stability to their property, real and personal and security to their persons it will be the greatest benefit they ever received from us."[2] Jones had no faith in the concept of Oriental Despotism as developed by Bernier, Montesquieu, Dow and others. Though he believed that Asia should be ruled by absolute power he could not agree that India, which had created such a great civilisation, had no private property and had never experienced feudalism: "Unless I am greatly deceived, the work now presented to the public, decides the question which has started, whether, by the Mugul constitution, the sovereign be not the sole proprietor of all the land in his empire, which he or his predecessors have not granted to a subject and his heirs;

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1. Letter to William Shipley. 5.10.1786. As published in Shore, J., Memoirs, p.288.
2. Letter to Lady Georgina 24.10.1791. Spencer papers.

for nothing can be more certain, than that land, rents and goods, are, in the language of the Mohammedan lawyers, property alike alienationable and inheritable.... No Muselman prince in any age or country would have harboured a thought of controverting these authorities."[1] As to the Hindus they "most assuredly were absolute proprietors of their land though they called their sovereigns lords of the Earth".[2] So the purpose of the British Government in India would be best served by "promoting the security of the right of property to the natives", who by their "cheerful industry will enrich their benefactors and whose firm attachment will secure the permanence of our dominion".[3] Perhaps he had Cornwallis's plans for Permanent Settlement in mind when he wrote to William Shipley, the brother of the Bishop of St. Asaph, "it is now settled here, that the natives are proprietors of their land and that it shall descend by their own laws. I am engaged in superintending a complete system of Indian laws".[4] Thus his Digest was to

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1. Al Sirajiyyah, pp. IX-XI
2. Op.cit., p. XII His Theory of the Indian system of Law and Government could be traced in his translation of Manu, Books, VII, VIII and IX. see Institutes of Hindu Law, p. 194 . cf. Mill J. The history of British India, Vol.I,p. 260.
3. Al-Sirajiyyah, p. XIII
4. Letter to William Shipley, 11.10.1790. As published in Shore, J., Memoirs, p.341.

be a legacy to the Indians, and its purpose was twofold; to give the Indians their own laws and to protect their private property; thus it was complementary to Cornwallis's Permanent Settlement.

If in his attitude to the Gordon Riots one could detect his distrust of the ordinary people, he was equally distrusting towards the Indian masses. It was the Brahmins, the Maulavis and the propertied upper class, men like Radhakanta, Ramlochan, Ali Ibrahim Khan and the Maharaja of Krishnagar, whom he treated as his equals. He had very little sympathy for the ordinary Indians, the servants, common seamen, and ordinary shopkeepers. "Excessive luxury, with which the Asiaticks are too indiscriminately reproached in Europe exists indeed in our settlements but not where it is usually supposed; not in the higher, but in the lowest condition of men; in our servants, in the common seamen frequenting our port, in the petty workmen and shopkeepers of our streets and markets: there live the men, who to use the phrase of an old statute, sleep by day and wake by night, for the purposes of gaming, debauchery and intoxication".[1] The black British subjects had to be protected from these men and the

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1. Charges to the Grand Jury, 10.6.1787. Works.,vol.7., p.25.

Court of Justice should inflict severe punishment on such men to deter them from crime. He did not hesitate to recommend corporal punishment by "having both ears nailed to the pillory"[1] for perjury. English common laws allow such punishment but in India he observed, that, the "Hindu writers have exalted ideas of criminal justice, and in their figurative style, introduce the person of punishment with great sublimity: 'Punishment' say they, 'with a black complexion and a red eye inspires terror but alarms the guilty only; punishment guards those who sleep, nourishes the people, secures the state from calamity, and produces the happiest consequences in a country where it is justly inflicted; when unjustly the magistrate cannot escape censure nor the nation adversity".[2] This did not prevent him from feeling Christian charity towards indebted prisoners,[3] and from openly criticising for the first time the slave trade in Bengal.[4] Nevertheless his love, sympathy and admiration was not for the ordinary Indian people but for the upper class and the learned scholars.

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1. ~~op.cit., 4.12.1788, p.34~~. Charges to the Grand Jury. 10.6.1787. Works. Vol.1. p. 34
2. Charges To The Grand Jury, 10.6.1785. Works, Vol.1.7.p.20. This is from Manu, VII, 39. Jones used a Persian version of the work.
3. Op.cit., pp.12-14.
4. Op.cit., pp. 14-18.

III.

Once the project of his Digest was accepted Jones appointed two pandits and two Muslim scholars and worked, as he had promised, regularly every day for six years. The task took longer than he originally expected, and he died before it was completed.

H e had been planning to travel to China and America before he finally returned to England, to retire to the "Sabine farm" which he wanted to purchase in Middlesex. He probably gave up his original plan when he realised that the compilation of the Digest would take longer than he expected, for he arranged with Herdford Jones, an English agent in Baghdad, to travel to England, through Persia and Turkey.[1] But by March 1, 1794 he had decided to travel by boat when the Digest was complete and to translate it during the voyage.[2]

But none of his last plans were fulfilled. His health was as precarious as his wife's, although he never admitted it. In 1793 he was twice taken ill. Perhaps since Anna Maria's departure on 28 November he had not been as careful as he should have been. In early April

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1. Letter from Herdford Jones. 12.6.1793. N.L.W.4904F.
2. Letter to Henry Dundas 1.3.1794, as published in Works Vol.8. pp 157-158.

he had not been well and on the 20th he was taken ill again. On the morning of 27 April John Shore, now the Governor General and a neighbour of Jones, was aroused by Sir William's servants and asked to attend their master in order to hear his last words. When Shore reached him it was too late, and Jones had breathed his last.[1]

The funeral was held on the next day with all the ceremony that was to be expected on such occasions in eighteenth century Calcutta. There was a procession headed by the European troops of the garrison with arms reversed and drums muffled, marching to the accompaniment of sacred tunes played by the artillery band. The gentlemen of the settlement followed in their carriages and palanquins while guns were fired from the ramparts of Fort William.[2]

The news of her husband's death reached Anna Maria late in 1794. In January 1795 she was still filled with grief, consoling herself with Barrow's sermons, especially the one on the submission to Divine Will, which her husband had selected for her in 1789 when he received the news of her father's death. She thanked her God for being able to

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1. John Shore to his wife 27.4.1794.,as published in Shore, C. Memoirs, p.286.
2. Calcutta Gazette,1.5.1794. Selections.,Vol.II,p.387.

live with such a friend as her husband. "Few can glory in like happiness or consequently lament the like loss."[1] she wrote to Charles Grant.

There were many others who lamented his death both in India and in Britain. John Shore described how in his Darber on 1, May 1794, "the professors of Hindu law, "burst out into unrestrained tears"[2], as they spoke of Jones. Their feelings were understandable. The pandits and the Muslim scholars had lost a great friend by his death. Men like Radhakanta, Ramlochan, Govardhan Kaul, Ali Ibrahim Khan and Ghulam Hussain were all indebted to him. He had loved them and had been proud of their friendship.[3] When Pandit Radhakanta was in trouble with his estate Jones persuaded Shore to help him.[4] Again it was largely through Jones's persuasion that Radhakanta received a pension of 300 sikka rupees a month on his retirement.[5] Similarly Jones had pleaded with John Rous to reward Ghulam Hussain by enlarging his jagir in Husainabad.[6]

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1. Anna Maria to Charles Grant, 29.1.1795,as published in Morris,H., William Jones, p.25.
2. Journal of John Shore, 1.5.1794. as published in Shore, C.,Memoirs, p.289.
3. On Asiatick history, Civil and Natural,As.R.Vol.IV,p.7.
4. Letter to John Shore. 16.8.1787. As published in Shore, J., Memoirs, pp. 294-95.
5. Letter to George John 25.9.1793. Spencer papers.
6. Letter to John Rous. Camb. 6958.

What is the legacy of Jones? The Digest was unfinished when he died, and when this was at last completed it was of very little practical value. The new middle classes of India, no doubt, benefitted from British rule, but Jones's Digest helped very little in protecting their persons and property.[1]

The greatest contribution of Jones to India was the foundation of the Asiatick Society. Through this Society enthusiasm for Indian studies spread throughout Europe and India. From 1829 onwards Indians played a full part in the activities of the Society. No doubt modern Indian nationalism is a by-product of British rule and western influence.[2] But India could hardly have withstood the cultural challenge of the West without drawing heavily on her past glory. It was Jones and the Society which he founded who discovered that India had produced a civilisation equal to any other in the ancient world. The dignity and pride this discovery gave to the Indians is an undeniable factor in the growth of the national movement. When Raja Rammohan Roy[3] spoke of the Unitarian concept of

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1. Derrett, J.D.M. Sanskrit legal Treaties, pp.109-112.
2. Hobsbawm, E.J., Age of Revolutions, p.139, cf. Misra, B.B., Indian Middle Classes, pp.10-17.
3. Roy, Rammohan, Works, Vol. I pp.115-139.

God in the Vedic literature he was only enlarging upon Jones's ideas and similarly when Vivekananda talked about the Vedānta as the fountain source of all religions,[1] he was echoing Jones.

He made very little impact on European thoughts. No doubt Goethe borrowed a device of dramaturgy from Kālidāsa which is to be found in the prologue of Faust. Perhaps his final chorus of the second part of that work was inspired by Indian thought.[2] If Hegel was influenced by Indian thought it was largely through Anquetil-Duperron's work and not through Jones. Jones left behind him an attitude of mind, a profound reverence to men irrespective of their race and their different cultural backgrounds. This attitude is valid for all time, and Jones's support of it was an inspiration to many men of later generations, who had dealings with India. This and his admiration for human endeavour as a means to virtue and happiness is best illustrated in a Persian couplet which he translated,

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1. Vivekananda - Complete Works of Vivekananda, Vol. I, pp386-391.
2. Basham, A.L., Wonder that was India, p.487.

"Crush not yon ant who stores the golden grain:
He lives with pleasure and he dies with pain:
Learn from him rather to secure the spoil
Of patient cares and pursuit of toil".

He loved this because it upheld, firstly, the maxim of the love for all creatures, "one great article of primitive religion delivered by God to man", and secondly "the necessity of labour if we wish to be virtuous and happy".[1]

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1. Letter to George John 20.8.1787. Spencer papers.

Appendix I.

"Thoughts on a system of judicature for India"

The following plan for the British administration of justice in India was written by Jones for Burke. We do not know the exact date when this was written, but it must have been before 13 April 1784, for soon after that, Jones quarrelled with Burke over his friendship with Hastings.[1] This is perhaps another example of how Jones compromised his Whig conception of the balance of power with the British Indian system. His proposed system was to follow the old Mughal customs, yet it should be worked out in such a way that there would be reciprocal checks and balances of power for the security of the natives and Europeans.

The "best practical system of judicature for India:-

1. A system forced upon a people invincibly attached to opposite habits would in truth be a system of cruel tyranny.
2. Any system of judicature affecting the natives in Bengal and not having for its basis the old Mogul

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1. Letters to Edmund Burke 27.2.1784 and 13.4.1784.

constitution would be dangerous and impracticable.

3. All original jurisdiction against natives without the Mahratta ditch except that exercised by the Courts, Dewanei adalet according to the forms used and approved will produce confusion and misery.
4. The native suitors in the Dewanei Courts should be enabled to obtain justice as formerly, with the least possible expense and delay.
5. The criminal jurisdiction must be left to the courts of Foujdaree adalet and on appeal to the Nizamet; while the revenue jurisdiction remains wholly with the Governor and Council as Dewan of the provinces.
6. An effective appellete jurisdiction or Sedr Dewanei adalet is essential to the complete dispensation of justice in disputes among the natives.
7. The court of appeal should consist of the Governor and Council as Dewan with one assistant judge or president of the Sedr Adalet.
8. Digests of Hindu and Mohamedan laws should be compiled by chosen Conongos, Mulavis and Pandits and copies of them reposited in the Treasuries of the several Dewanei adalets.
9. Native interpretors of the respective laws must be duly selected and appointed with such subjects as

will entitle them to respect and raise them above temptation.

10. The laws of the natives must be preserved inviolate; but the learning and vigilance of the English judge must be a check upon the native interpretors.
11. The decrees in the Sadr adalet must be conformable to Hindu and Mahomedan law as the parties or defendants shall be Hindu or Mahomedans.
12. The natives must have an effective tribunal for their protection against the English or the country will soon be rendered worse than useless to Britain.
13. An effective original jurisdiction over all the English (except the Governor and Council) and against the natives within the Mahratta ditch is essential to the peace and preservation of Bengal.
14. The English Court should consist of four, six and any even number of aldermen assisted by the knowledge and sagacity of a judge or president.
15. The climate would make it necessary to appoint a deputy judge in each court to relieve the president in case of illness.
16. The aldermen must be restrained by frequent elections from influence or cabal, and the judges in both courts secured from want of dignity and danger by liberal not extravagant salaries.

17. No suit must be continued in Bengal on any particular suggestion whatever against the governor and council.
18. The English court should be compelled to receive and record evidence if any be offered against the Governor and Council and transmit it, if required to England.
19. Pleas to the jurisdiction would involve all the mischiefs incident to an original jurisdiction over the natives in general.
20. If wrongs are committed by the native agents of Europeans, actions may be commenced and process must issue against the principals.
21. A circuit would be ruinous in point of expense beyond all calculation here, and beyond the produce of any tax upon the proceedings.
22. The provincial adalets should be impowered to take depositions or such evidence as the several religions, casts, and sexes of the witness will allow and the evidence so taken should be admissible in the court at Calcutta.
23. A system like this consisting of reciprocal checks and balances of power would give satisfaction and security to the natives, the government and the English subjects in India."[1]

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1. Burke notes 9c. Wentworth muniments.

Appendix II.

A Letter to Lord Cornwallis

Melville papers N.L.S.3386.f.207.

The following Letter is perhaps an example of the close cooperation between Jones and Cornwallis.

Court House 20 Nov.r 1790

My Lord,

The adjournment of the Court having given me a whole day of leisure I have spent the morning in reading with great attention your Lordship's Minute on the administration of criminal justice in the provinces, and in perusing the papers which accompany it. I read them all with my pen in my hand, intending to write without reserve all objections that may occur to me: but I found nothing to which I could object, and did not meet with a single paragraph to which, if I were a member of the Council I would not heartily express my assent. The power of **pardoning** which (in par. 44) is reserved to the Court should be always exercised, I think, by the Governor in Council in his executive, not his judicial, capacity, and in par. 61 the words 'which is always to

be received with circumspection and tenderness' are applied to the accusation, though, I presume, they were intended for the prisoner's confession. These are trifling remarks, but I cannot start one serious objection; and think the whole minute unexceptionably just wise and benevolent.

I am with great respect

Your Lordship's

ever faithful Servant,

/Signed/ W. Jones

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ILLUSTRATIONS.

The following illustrations refer to the fourth chapter. These prints are from the Thomas Pennant collection at the National Library of Wales. They were published to satirize the rejoicing in Wales, on Shipley's return, after his acquittal. (Ref. N.L.W. 2409C)

Conſtitutional Information.

At a Meeting of a new Society for *propagating* Conſtitutional Principles, lately held at G------, in the County of D------, Mrs. *****, a certain jolly, Epiſcopal Newſmonger in that Neighbourhood, having been unanimouſly voted into an eaſy Chair, the following Reſolutions were propoſed and carried, nem. con. viz.

RESOLVED, That the Letter ſigned *Veritas*, lately publiſhed in the Cheſter Chronicle, contains too true a Repreſentation of the Dean of St. Aſaph's triumphal Entry into the County of Denbigh; and that every poſſible Means be uſed by the Members of this Society to induce the Public to diſbelieve the Facts therein ſtated.

Reſolved, That the *Denbigh 'Squire*, the Grand Puffer, Fabricator, and *Retailer* General of Falſehoods, to this Society, having in a Letter ſome Time ſince publiſhed under the Signature of Philo-Juris, attempted to make the Public believe that *ſome Thouſands* of real and independent Gentlemen had attended the Dean's Cavalcade; and it being too well known in the County, that only *One* Gentleman of that Deſcription, and of *Reſpect and Underſtanding*, attended upon that Occaſion, and he only for a few Minutes; it is become abſolutely neceſſary to have another Account publiſhed, which will have a little more the Appearance of Truth, and conſequently be more likely to be credited, viz. that the Number of the Dean's Attendants amounted only to *Five Hundred*, conſiſting of Hirelings, Reverend Dependants, and Gentlemen Butchers of the Dioceſe of St. Aſaph, with Bob Knock at their Head.

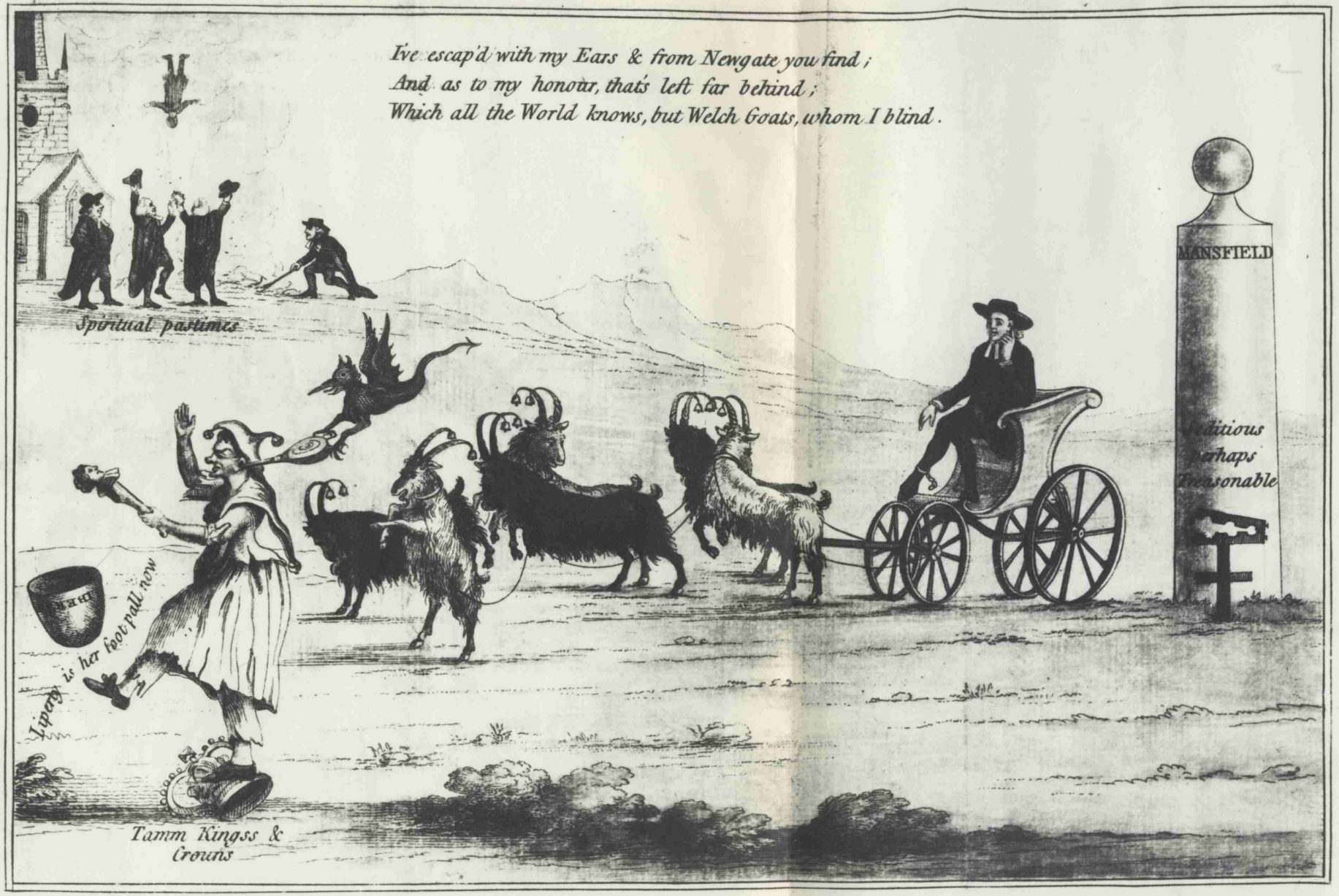
Reſolved, That no Pains be ſpared by the Members of this Society, to invent ſuch Falſehoods as may have a Chance of throwing a Stigma upon all thoſe who have had any Hand in the Proſecution, particularly the Honourable and truly loyal Character, who ſo conſcientiouſly diſcharged his Duty as Sheriff, in inſtituting the Proſecution; the ſixteen reſpectable Grand Jurymen, who found the Bill at Wrexham; the twelve reſpectable Characters who ſerved as Special Jurors upon the Trial of the Indictment at Shrewſbury, when the Dean was found *Guilty*; and the two learned and much reſpected Judges who preſided at the Hearing of the Buſineſs at both thoſe Places.

The *Motions* for the above Reſolutions were *firſt* made to the Chair by Capt. *Bob*-adil; and ſeconded by —— of St. A——. *They* were *carried* without a diſſenting Voice, when the Meeting at laſt broke up, but with Liberty for the *Members* to have a private Audience with, and free Acceſs *into*, the Chair, upon *Conſtitutional Principles*, whenever a convenient Opportunity offers.

Signed by Order of the Meeting,

MAJOR *WOODCOCK*, SEC.

N. B. The gallant C—— was *faſt aſleep* when theſe ſeveral *Motions were made*; but it is well known that he never yet has taken, nor is he ever likely to take, a very *active* Part in *Conſtitutional Struggles*.



The Triumph of Turbulence or Mother Cambria posessed.

23 & 24 Decr 1784.

Sold at N° 227. Strand, London.